

HOW TO REVITALIZE THE BLACK BAPTIST CHURCH  
EMPOWERING THE CHURCH BOARD  
TO WORK WITH THE PASTOR  
FOR CHANGE

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**ABSTRACT**

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by

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Bethel Baptist Church is a traditional Black Baptist Church in White Plains, New York. Traditional Black Baptist Churches in inner city communities are in a state of plateau and decline needing renewal and revitalization. The researcher hypothesized that implementation of a strategic six-session Christian leadership training model would transform the church board from change inhibitors to change supporters. A qualitative action research methodology incorporating preliminary survey, post survey, observations, and reflections was used to evaluate the effectiveness of this project. The researcher concluded that the church board could be equipped and empowered to work with the pastor as change supporters.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work is the result of the efforts and inspiration of many dear souls who have invested in my life over the years. First I thank God for God's wonderful blessings and mercy throughout my life. I am greatly indebted to Rev. Henry Nicholson and members of the Truelight Baptist Church of East St. Louis, Illinois where I met Christ and began my spiritual journey in the Sunday School. I am also greatly indebted to Rev. John H. Rouse and the members of the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of East St. Louis, Illinois where I was nurtured and developed in my formative years as a youth and young adult being prepared for ministry and service in the body of Christ.

I acknowledge Rev. A. G. Williams and the Mt. Olive Baptist Church of East St. Louis, Illinois where I served as an assistant to the pastor for two years and learned how to love and care for members of the body of Christ. I acknowledge the members of the Southern Missionary Baptist Church who allowed me the opportunity to serve and grow in my first assignment to pastoral ministry. I acknowledge the contributions to my professional development of Beautiful Plain Baptist Church of Binghamton, New York where, upon the recommendation of one of my mentors, Dr. William Burwell, they issued the call for me to leave familiar surroundings and to discover my independence in ministry as their pastor for five years of growth and development.

I must also acknowledge and express extreme appreciation to the Bethel Baptist Church of White Plains, New York for supporting this effort and my educational development. I am greatly appreciative to officers, church leaders, and members for their

participation in the project and the encouragement and support they have given as I pursued completing the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry degree program.

Special recognition is expressed to the following context associates: Rev. Frozine Reece-Smith, Sis. Paulette Chappelle-Warren, Sis. Beverly Meyers-Bryant, and Deacon Frank Williams, as well as all members of the Church Board and church leaders who participated in this project.

Special recognition and acknowledgment is also extended to the following professional associates: Dr. Brenda Grant Davis, Dr. Walter G. Robinson, and Dr. Eric Rogers.

Finally, this work could not have been completed without the guidance of my Mentor, Dr. J. Sherman Pelt, the guidance of United faculty member Dr. Larry Welbourne, and the camaraderie of my peers Philip Lilly, Harold Cottom, III, and the Christian and Urban Ministries peer group.

It is my hope that any honor or recognition received for this work would be shared by all of the above and the many writers who have shared their knowledge and experiences to help shape me into the servant of God that I am in the process of becoming. To God be all the glory!

## DEDICATION

For my grandparents, the late Deacon Jackson Ivory and Geneva Ivory, for laying the foundations for my Christian life. For Mrs. Johnnie B. Howard and her late husband, Mr. Ruffin Howard, who picked me up for Sunday School and instilled in me a great admiration for the value of senior members of the church because of their prayers and encouragement in my formative years.

For the wonderful women in my life who serve as sources of love, inspiration, and encouragement: my wife, Deborah, my daughters, Stefanie and Jennifer, and my mother Ruby. I love you and I thank God for you all.

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The church must change its program to keep pace with the time.

Rev. John G. Williamson  
Pastor Bethel Baptist Church (1914-1942)

## INTRODUCTION

The traditional Black Baptist Church of the inner city is in a state of crisis. Once burgeoning symbols of hope and stability, they now show signs of plateau and decline. The traditional Black Baptist Church of the inner city stands in need of renewal and revitalization for continued relevance in order to conduct effective ministry in the twenty-first century. Revitalization and renewal efforts in the Black Baptist Church are currently hindered or prohibited by bureaucratic systems, structures, and traditions that have developed over the years to maintain the church as an institution in the community.

The institutional gatekeepers are church boards usually composed of deacons, trustees, or a combination of both groups. This project focused upon transforming the church board from a change inhibitor in the church renewal and revitalization process to a change supporter. The researcher believes that through training and development, church boards can be equipped and empowered to work with pastors as supporters of change.

Much of the church growth and renewal literature focuses upon the pastor as the primary change agent in the local church. However, it is this researcher's belief that an essential element necessary to facilitate effective and lasting change in the traditional Black Baptist Church lies in the effective functioning of the church board.

Aubrey Malphurs states,

It's important to note that when the typical smaller, established church brings on a new pastor, he doesn't become a leader right away . . . The new pastor has to work through several phases—the chaplain, pastor, and leader phases—before becoming a significant leader . . . Usually this takes no less than five or six years; however, some churches in general and church boards in particular

may never turn the reins of authority over to the pastor, even after he's gone through the phases. Currently far too many pastors aren't staying around in these churches long enough to find out. Thus, these churches are perpetually board run. Consequently, the clear majority of churches in America are led by governing boards no matter what polity (church government) they profess.<sup>1</sup>

New pastors entering traditional Black Baptist Church ministry context are often overwhelmed by the complexity involved in initiating change in these ministry settings. Although the pastor is a key influential leader in the change process in the Black Baptist Church, she or he must have the support of the church board and other stakeholders in the congregation to navigate bureaucratic systems, structures, and processes embedded within the church structure to become successful at initiating and implementing lasting change efforts that lead to renewal and revitalization.

The researcher entered the ministry context of Bethel Baptist Church of White Plains, New York in May of 2004. Bethel is a 120-year-old traditional Black Baptist Church located in the inner city of White Plains. The researcher is the third pastor to serve the congregation following the retirement of the last long-tenured pastor of the congregation in 1991.

The church is currently in a state of plateau and headed toward decline and death if revitalization and renewal initiatives are not implemented. Shawchuck and Heuser state,

While it is important for leaders to understand the various stages in the life cycle of their congregations, it is even more consequential to be able to do something about it, especially in the declining phase.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Leading Leaders: Empowering Church Boards For Ministry Excellence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Leading the Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 162-163.

Bethel stands in need of renewal and revitalization and something must be done or the church will eventually die. This project is an effort to “do something about it!” This project is an action-research-based study of the impact of the development and implementation of a Christian leadership training and development model directed toward improving the effectiveness of the church board at Bethel Baptist Church.

The researcher hypothesizes that properly trained and motivated leaders on the church board will be the key to initiating effective church renewal and revitalization initiatives and strategies to begin a new organizational life cycle. This project is directed at transforming the church board and transforming the church culture. The church board will be transformed from a change inhibitor to a change supporter.

In the forward to *How To Change Your Church (without killing it)*, Bill Hybel writes,

Sadly, most local churches are functioning at only a fraction of their redemptive potential. Too often, visions are fuzzy, values are undefined, and volunteers are unmotivated. Revitalizing defeated churches is a huge challenge . . . As we move into the twenty-first century, massive changes must be made in how we do church. Yesterday’s approaches will not work tomorrow. We must learn not only what to improve, but how to make the transitions manageable. In other words, how can we remedy the flock’s illness without making it sicker? God is going to have to raise up a whole new generation of church leaders who see themselves more as change agents than maintainers; pioneers instead of pacifiers.<sup>3</sup>

The researcher feels he has a call from God and the congregation to pursue this project. The researcher has fifteen years of pastoral experience working with traditional Black Baptist Churches. The researcher has observed and experienced first-hand the challenges and conflict associated with initiating change and renewal and revitalization efforts in traditional Black Baptist Churches.

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<sup>3</sup> Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, *How To Change Your Church (without killing it)* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), xi.

Traditions of the past and out-dated bureaucratic structures and systems hinder the successful implementation of the change initiatives necessary for the traditional Black Baptist Church to experience much needed renewal and revitalization.

In 1999, the researcher witnessed the election of President William J. Shaw to the presidency of the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc. President Shaw ran on a platform of the acronym VISA. VISA stood for vision, integrity, structure, and accountability. The researcher witnessed how President Shaw organized and developed a leadership team and implemented program initiatives to rescue a struggling organization from a state of plateau and decline. The researcher surmised that if effective leadership could turn around a national convention, then effective leadership could also turn around a local congregation that is in a state of plateau and decline and in need of renewal and revitalization.

Geoffrey V. Guns states, “Leaders are vital to the survival and effectiveness of any organization. Effective leaders will invariably lead their organizations to achieve their goals . . . Organizations without effective leadership will always have a difficult time succeeding. Without leaders, organizations will flounder and never reach their goals.”<sup>4</sup>

Guns argues that the African American Church will need better equipped pastors and lay leaders for twenty-first century leadership.<sup>5</sup> This project focuses upon the development of a Christian leadership training model to equip and empower church leaders to serve more effectively in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey V. Guns, *Spiritual Leadership: A Guide To Developing Spiritual Leaders In The Church* (Lithonia, GA: Orman Press, 2000), 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 17.

## **The Problem**

Bethel Baptist Church is in a state of plateau and in need of revitalization. After one year of study and observation, the researcher has discovered patterns of conflict and dysfunction that have hindered his ability to launch new initiatives and promote change in the ministry context. Key factors hindering and prohibiting change are the dysfunctional nature of the church board and an inefficient organizational structure that hinders the implementation of change initiatives and revitalization efforts. The effective functioning of the church board is being hampered because of conflicts between church board members, role confusion regarding the function of the church board, and a sense of distrust and disrespect among board members.

The researcher has spent the first year in the ministry context putting out fires, assessing church health, and discerning causes for the current state of the plateau and decline in the congregation. Many of the problems at the church leadership level exist because members of the church board have not received orientation or training to equip and empower them to serve in their respective leadership roles.

The effective functioning of the board has been hindered because of the lack of a clear vision for the church and the inability to develop and implement strategic plans to achieve church purposes, goals, and objectives. The researcher determined that leadership training would be necessary to promote unity, effective functioning, and growth in the church body. The researcher, after prayer, reflection, and consultation with peers and associates, endeavored to pursue a project focused upon the training and development of the church board.

## **The Intervention**

The researcher developed six in-service training modules directed at equipping, enabling, and empowering church board members to work with the pastor as a leadership team to provide visionary leadership to the congregation leading to church renewal and revitalization.

### **The Hypothesis**

The researcher hypothesized that after participating in an effective Christian leadership training program, the church board would be transformed and become better equipped and enabled to support, promote, and assist the pastor with the development and implementation of change initiatives that would lead to renewal and revitalization of Bethel Baptist Church and signal the beginning of a new organizational life cycle at Bethel.

### **The Evaluation**

The researcher utilized an action research methodology and qualitative analysis methods to collect data and determine the impact of this project. He utilized the following qualitative data collection and analysis tools: a pre-training survey, a church board self-evaluation assessment, and a post training survey. The researcher also utilized observation, interviews, and reflections to determine needs and assess the outcomes and impact of this action research project.

## **The Summary**

Church boards are representative bodies empowered by congregations formally or informally by default as governing agencies in the church vested with decision making authority and policy making power. Church boards are viewed as gatekeepers of the local faith community as well as institutional caretakers. Church boards often view their function as to provide oversight of the pastor and to protect the congregation from abuse by the pastor.

In pursuing this perceived role, church boards often become hindrances to the pastor instead of pastoral supporters and supporters of change. For renewal and revitalization efforts to have lasting impact in the traditional Black Baptist Church, church boards must be trained and equipped to become change supporters as opposed to change inhibitors working with pastors for renewal and revitalization.

In the organizational structure of Bethel, the church board is the primary leadership and decision-making body of the congregation. Matters to be presented to the church must be brought before the church board for review and action or presentation to the church body. Issues discussed by both trustees and deacons are shared and ratified by the church board.

The church board of Bethel is composed of the pastor, deacons, and trustees. In 2005, new trustee nominees were designated as trustees in training and permitted to function as part of the trustee board and the church board while participating in in-service leadership training and development activities because it was decided that they needed additional training and development before being granted full status as a church trustee.



There are a total of twenty members who make up the church board including the pastor. There are eight deacons on the deacon board, three trustees and five trustees in training serving as trustees on the trustee board, and three individuals that serve on both the deacon and the trustee boards in dual capacities.

Fourteen members of the church board participated in the project. Five members of the church board could not participate in the project because of work schedules and vacation scheduling during the time of the implementation that prevented them from being able to attend the in-service training sessions and workshops.

The project group included five members who serve as deacons, two members who serve as trustees, the five trustees in training, and two members who serve as both deacons and trustees. The pastor served in the capacity of researcher. There were three female and eleven males participating in the project with ages ranging from thirty-three to eighty.

The church board is referred to as the joint board by church board members and members of the congregation. The church board structure emerged by consensus during the early seventies. There were three initiatives to revise the constitution and officially recognize the church board structure that were never ratified although the concept of a joint church board is accepted and adhered to by the congregation.

Prior to the seventies, the pastor and deacons were the primary leaders of the church and the trustees were primarily behind the scenes individuals concerned with business affairs and church property issues.

Deacons were often selected after serving on the trustee board. In previous years, deacons and trustees maintained a good working relationship. They formed committees

with representation from both boards and shared in the responsibility for decision making and providing church leadership.

The pastor and deacons serve indefinite tenures after their initial election. The trustees are selected by a nominating committee process and elected each year at the annual church business meeting.

In the past ten years, tensions between the trustee board and the deacon board have become increasingly strained. The researcher believes the issue beneath the tension is the misunderstanding caused by using the term joint board as opposed to using the term church board. A goal of this training project will be to convince both the members of the trustee board and the members of the deacon board that when they come together as the church board, they become a united entity that functions as the governing board for the church.

The researcher believes he has been called by God to minister in the area of leadership training and development in the traditional Black Baptist Church. In fulfilling this call the following ministry project has emerged as a means for bringing about renewal and revitalization at Bethel Baptist Church, a traditional Black Baptist Church. The participant researcher initiated this project with the belief that through orientation and training of the church board, the church board would be transformed from a change inhibitor to a change supporter working with the pastor and other church leaders and stakeholders to bring about renewal and revitalization at Bethel.

The above hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of church board training was developed and tested using an action research development model and qualitative research data collection and analysis techniques. The training model included six training sessions focusing upon church board responsibilities and Christian leadership principles.

Participants were given a pre-training survey, a church board self-assessment survey, and a post-training survey to evaluate the value and effect of the training model. The project was implemented over a twelve-week period.

In the following pages, the reader will journey with the participant researcher through the processes of discovery, development, implementation, and evaluation of this project.

Chapter One will provide background information regarding the ministry context and the researcher. The reader will discover that Bethel has a rich history of ministry in the community and has been greatly impacted by the leadership and stability of three long-tenured pastors. The participant researcher entered the ministry context with approximately fifteen years of pastoral ministry experiences with traditional Black Baptist Churches. The participant researcher believes there is a readiness to accept training and pastoral leadership following two brief pastorates since the retirement of the last long-tenured pastor in 1991.

Chapter Two will focus upon a review of developments in leadership training and visionary leadership for congregations. The participant researcher discovered that most of the available literature focused upon the training and development of pastors and little attention was given to the training and development of church boards. The participant researcher will also present in this section material relevant to understanding the development and training of leadership unique to the Black Church. The participant researcher concluded from the readings that a study of church board training and development related to empowering the church board as a change agent to work with the pastor was a justifiable area of research.

Chapter Three will focus upon theoretical foundations under girding the project. The participant researcher discovered that Christian education and training in the Black Baptist Church was limited to the abilities of the pastor. Education and leadership training are significant themes and concepts in the Bible. It is through leadership training that the church is enabled to continue relevant ministry to its members and constituents. The researcher used Black Liberation Theology as presented by James Cone as a guiding theological framework to undergird his study. The church must develop an outward focus for ministry directed at spreading the gospel and be involved in issues related to liberation and justice for the oppressed in tangible ways. This theological perspective will fuel change and renewal initiatives at Bethel.

Chapter Four will focus upon methodology and development of the project. The participant researcher will defend his choice of an action research method and selection of qualitative research techniques in the design of this research project. The action research method was selected because of the researcher's desire to initiate transformation and social change in the project participants and the ministry context. The researcher was involved in the process and able to observe the implementation and impact upon participants and the context. The researcher sought to engage participants as stakeholders in the outcome of the project and enlist the participants as co-researchers in the process. Qualitative data collection and analysis methods were used to evaluate outcomes from the implementation of the project.

Chapter Five will focus upon the field experience. This section focuses upon the actual implementation of the project, observations, and the collection and evaluation of data. The project was implemented over a twelve-week period. The objective was to administer six Christian leadership-training modules to participants who are members of

the existing church board structure. There were fourteen participants in the project. They completed a pre-training survey, a church board self-assessment evaluation, and a post-training survey. Observations during the training and in subsequent church board meetings were made to determine the impact of the training. Discussions were held with context associates regarding the training. Interviews were conducted with participants to ensure that training needs were being met. Videotape recordings were also made of training sessions for review and evaluation.

Chapter Six will serve as the concluding chapter of this work. Chapter Six will include reflections by the researcher, a summary of the experience, and conclusions drawn by the researcher.

This study was conducted in the unique context of the Bethel Baptist Church of White Plains, New York. The researcher was the new pastor of the 120-year-old congregation with fifteen years of pastoral leadership experience. At the time of implementation, he had been serving the congregation for approximately one and one-half years. The church board was composed of deacons, trustees, and trustees in training from various backgrounds and with varying levels of skill, experience, and academic attainment. For this particular ministry context, the training proved to be effective and therefore may be valuable for further study and duplication by other groups in similar contexts and situations.

## CHAPTER ONE

### MINISTRY FOCUS: BACKGROUND FOR THE JOURNEY

Bringing about change in an organization embedded in rigidity and inertia is likened to teaching an elephant to dance, according to James Belasco. Beyond the image of a dancing elephant is a lesson about being “bound to the past.” When trainers shackle a young elephant to a stake in the ground, the elephant learns to stay in place, giving up any attempt to pull up the stakes. After a while, all that is required to keep the elephant in its place is a small metal bracelet around one of its feet, even when it is not attached to any stake at all. Having once gotten the idea the bracelet is chained to a stake, the elephant will stay – all because of an inconsequential bracelet. Congregations, like elephants, are often bound by restraints, however insignificant they may be. Belasco drives the point home: “We’ve always done it this way” is a limiting to an organization’s progress as the unattached chain around the elephants foot. Success ties you to the past.

Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser  
*Leading the Congregation*<sup>1</sup>

#### The City

Bethel Baptist Church is a 120-year-old traditional Black Baptist Church that once served as a symbol of hope, pride, and stability in the community. Bethel Baptist Church is located in the city of White Plains, New York in central Westchester County. Westchester County has the distinction of being noted as one of the wealthiest counties in the state of New York. Westchester County provides the best of both worlds because of its proximity to the greater metropolitan New York City area as well as its setting in the Hudson Valley near the Hudson River.

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Leading the Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 165.

The Dutch and English began settling the area in the early 1600's. The area was initially a farming area with saw mills and gristmills established along area waterways. Trails formerly utilized by the Indians were used to establish roads in the area. The region was central during the time of the Revolutionary War. Key battles of the war were fought in White Plains and the nearby community of Pelham. General George Washington had headquarters and homes in the area that he utilized during military campaigns.

The area was drastically transformed in the 1800's with the coming of the railroad. Wealthy families utilized the rail access to build mansions and fine homes as summer retreats. The researcher lives in a home that once belonged to one of the mayors of White Plains. The home was utilized as a stopping point in the movement of runaway slaves following routes of the Underground Railroad.

Farming was replaced by industry and manufacturing. In the 1840's, there was the establishment of reservoirs in the area to meet the increased water demand by the city of New York. This allowed the development of great ethnic diversity through the immigration of mostly Italian and Irish immigrants coming into the area as laborers. The area continued to grow as a result of the county's proximity to New York. Over the years, many corporations have moved their headquarters into the area creating jobs and increasing prosperity.

According to the most recent census data, White Plains has a population of 53,077. The city is said to have received its name from the Indian who noticed dense fog covered the area in the area and gave it the name.

White Plains is a center for corporate, government and retail services. In this time of economic challenge and hardship for most of the country, White Plains is experiencing a period of renaissance and recovery. The downtown community has been revitalized to

the benefit of both residents and the business community. New residents are moving into the area causing a major increase in the development of luxury apartments and condominiums as well as creating a lucrative market for sellers of existing homes.

### **The Church**

With prosperity comes cost. Bethel Baptist Church, although located in affluent Westchester County, faces similar challenges to many Black Churches that are located in urban inner city areas. Bethel is located in what remains of a once flourishing Black neighborhood transformed by the impact of urban renewal and development efforts of the sixties and seventies.

A neighborhood of predominately middle-class Blacks and Black businesses that once surrounded the church has been replaced by five public housing units. The area is now one of the low-income areas of the city and the residents are predominately low-income and poor Blacks and Latinos.

A lot can be said by noticing that the cities highly publicized redevelopment plan has saved this area for the last phase of redevelopment and specifics of the plan have not been announced. Many of the middle-class Blacks that frequented Bethel and supported its life and ministries were forced or persuaded to move to other areas. The congregation continues to feel the impact of this community change.

Bethel has been an institution of hope in the community for over 120 years. Bethel is currently in a state of plateau and beginning to decline according to the congregational life-cycle theory of organizations as presented by Norman Shawchuck and



Roger Heuser.<sup>2</sup> Bethel has an aging membership. The current membership of the congregation is approximately 500.

Members are from a variety of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Most of the active members of the congregation drive from neighboring communities to worship services and activities held at the church. The median age of the congregation is approximately sixty-two. The median age for White Plains is thirty-eight and there are many young professionals and young families moving into the area.

The congregation is faced with the challenge of how to meet the needs of a new generation. The congregation cannot rest on the laurels and images of a bygone era. When one looks at Bethel, he or she sees the signs and traditions that are remnants of the glory days of the Black Church. The church edifice features a large sanctuary and a fellowship hall that relates to the emphasis of the traditional Black Baptist Church upon worship and fellowship gatherings.

Strong senior pastors and deacons shared the responsibility of leadership for the congregation. There was an emphasis upon paternal care and concern focusing upon visitation and the care of seniors, the sick, and shut-in. Churches especially came together to support members in times of crisis and distress, such as funerals or times when financial needs had to be met due to disaster or tragic circumstances.

The church operated under a strong authoritative leadership structure with a hierarchy with pastors and deacons at the apex. The church has few written policies and procedures available to direct the affairs and operations of the church. Decisions were made pragmatically based upon presentation and influence at board meetings and church meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 159-163.

The members of Bethel have strong connections with the South. Many of the members or their parents were part of the migration of Blacks from the South. The migrating Blacks brought their church and religious traditions with them.

To understand Bethel as a ministry context, one would do well to read *Church Administration in the Black Perspective* by Samuel B. McKinney and Floyd Massey, Jr.

They state,

Large numbers of people are involved in the worship experience of Black Churches. Gigantic usher boards execute their responsibilities, in some instances, with the precision of the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, in London, England; numerous vested choirs for all age groups sing every Sunday; large deacons' boards arrayed in black suits and white gloves, and deaconesses'/mothers' boards bedecked in white dresses on Communion Sunday are part of the Sunday drama in most urban Black Churches throughout the nation. Participation in the life of their church affirms and sustains the sense of "somebodiness" so greatly needed by people victimized by a racist society six days a week.<sup>3</sup>

Bethel is a traditional urban Black Baptist Church exemplifying many of the patterns and traditions discussed by Massey and McKinney. Bethel has an aging membership with most of the church leaders and attendees being over the age of fifty. Many of the stalwart members who were former leaders and supporters of the church and its ministries have either died, retired and moved away, or they are confined to their homes or nursing home facilities. Young adults and young families are not attracted to the church because of the image of being traditional and old-fashioned.

Yet, Bethel is an asset in the community. The church rents space to a daycare and also to the French Speaking Baptist Church of White Plains. The church still maintains

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel B. McKinney and Floyd Massey, Jr., *Church Administration in the Black Perspective* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1976).

over twenty-five ministries. The church sponsors after-school and summer enrichment programs to minister to the needs of children and youth of the community. The church also has a computer lab.

Bethel offers two Sunday morning worship services and a Wednesday Noonday worship service as well as prayer meeting and Bible study weekly. Bethel has a strong Missions ministry. Bethel is a supporter of the denomination at the local, state, and national levels. Bethel is also a supporter of the Lott Carey Mission Convention and other organizations in the community and across the country. It is the desire of the church leadership and the congregation to experience efforts of renewal and revitalization to continue to effectively serve the needs of members and the community in the twenty-first century.

### **Birth, Bethel, and The Early Years**

The church was founded in 1885 and incorporated on April 23, 1890. The church was organized as a small group prayer meeting held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Junious Wilkerson. Permission to organize the church was granted by the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church located in New York City. The first official meetings and worship services were held in the Lafayette Hall on Railroad Avenue in the Village of White Plains. In 1890, the church purchased the property at One Fisher Avenue in White Plains. A one-room frame building was constructed at a cost of \$1,325. The building was dedicated on May 17, 1891 to serve thirty-one parishioners who made up the congregation at that time. The church still meets at the building on the One Fisher Avenue (now Fisher Court) site that has been remodeled and modified over the years to meet the challenges and changing needs associated with church growth and new ministry needs.

### **Growth and The Three Pillars**

Although there have been a number of pastors since the inception of the church, three long-tenured pastors have served to provide leadership and stability for the congregation for the majority of its history. They were Rev. John G. Williamson (1914-1942), Rev. Thomas H. Slater (1942-1965), and Rev. Louis H. Wade (1966-1991). Under the leadership of these three pastors, significant church growth occurred and Bethel developed into a church with a rich heritage and tradition in the community.

Under the leadership of Rev. John G. Williamson, a remodeling and expansion program was completed. Rev. Williamson was a visionary and believed the church had to change with the times. Many church auxiliaries and clubs were established during his tenure. He led in affiliating the church with the New York State Baptist Convention and the church gained community and statewide prominence. He emphasized education, self-improvement, and thriftiness.

Rev. Thomas H. Slater served as the tenth pastor of the church from 1942-1965. He also completed a building project adding office space, meeting rooms, classrooms, and a fellowship hall. Rev. Slater served as a moderator of the Central Hudson Baptist Association. He was a fervent community leader and activist. Rev. Slater promoted Bethel as a “Missionary Church” and encouraged the development of a missionary philosophy of church work and ministry.

Rev. Louis H. Wade served as the eleventh pastor of Bethel. He served from 1966-1991. Rev. Wade is remembered for his administrative abilities. He promoted education and academic development. Under Rev. Wade’s administration the church attained a great degree of stability due to wise financial management and administration of church resources. During his tenure, Bethel was viewed as a high middle-class worshipping

church because of the attendance and support of successful Black business owners and social leaders. Membership was estimated to have peaked at about 1,000 during his tenure. Rev. Wade was a member and leader in many civic and religious organizations. He attained the Master of Divinity degree. He made several trips to the Holy Land and participated in evangelistic campaigns in Africa.

The researcher had an opportunity to interview Rev. Wade in January of 2005. During the course of the interview Rev. Wade shared his perspective on Bethel Baptist Church. He shared that the church was filled with good, well-meaning people. He stated that they needed leadership. He described the situation and practices of the church officers upon his arrival. He noted that when he arrived in 1966, they were still electing the pastor at each annual meeting, a practice he promptly changed. He advised the researcher to always care for his family and make plans for the future. Rev. Wade was a progressive thinker and found innovative ways to handle conflict and solve problems.

### **Plateau, Wandering, and Seeking Renewal**

Following the retirement of Rev. Wade, two pastors fulfilled relatively short periods in Bethel's history. Membership had fallen to approximately 500 members. Approximately 75% of the membership drives to church from other neighborhoods and surrounding communities. Female parishioners comprise 80% of the membership. Male parishioners account for approximately 20% of the membership. The median age is 60. Children and youth comprise approximately 10% of the membership.

Bethel is concerned with preparing for a much different future. The church has noted changes in the socio-economic status and educational background of the emerging congregation. The leaders and members of the congregation have discovered that traditions and commitments of past generations are losing their effectiveness in the

twenty-first century. The church is concerned with reaching a younger age group because the core membership that has sustained the congregation for the last thirty years is aging and/or dying.

Most of the deacons and ministry leaders are of retirement age and are concerned with attracting and preparing the next generation of leaders and members for service in the church. There is an emerging friction between leaders of different eras and socio-economic backgrounds. Generational differences and life stage concerns are causing conflict and inhibiting the development of a strong fellowship relationship within the congregation. Bethel, like similar inner city churches, the nation, and the world is feeling the stress of change in culture and society at many levels.

### **The Researcher**

The church called Edward, the researcher as its fourteenth pastor in May of 2004. This project was developed from the perspective of the participant researcher's role as pastor-teacher. The participant researcher sees himself as called by God and the congregation to serve as a catalyst in leading the process of renewal and revitalization for the church.

Edward is called to serve as a change agent for the congregation. They are seeking the development of church structures, ministries, and programs that will meet the needs of members and the surrounding community in the twenty-first century. One of the greatest needs expressed by the current leadership and the congregation is for an emphasis on Christian education and leadership training to equip the congregation and church leadership to effectively do the work of ministry.

Edward has entered this new ministry context with the desire to make a long-term commitment toward the development and implementation of new structures and

programs to enhance ministry effectiveness. In his role as pastor, he will also serve as a catalyst and change agent for developing and implementing Christian education systems and programs for leadership training that will revitalize, transform, and equip the congregation and its leadership for ministry capable of meeting the changing needs and challenges of the twenty-first century.

Edward, is a native of East St. Louis, Illinois, a predominantly Black community. He has fifteen years of experience in pastoral ministry primarily serving traditional Black Baptist Churches. He was born and reared in a Christian home. His grandfather was a deacon and a source inspiration for Edward's spiritual growth and development. Edward's mother served as a trustee as well as held numerous other offices in the local church. These early foundations allowed the researcher to be firmly rooted in the life, ministry, and traditions of the Black Baptist Church.

Edward first professed belief in Christ at the age of six while attending Sunday School. Edward was not allowed to be baptized because his parents and grandparents felt he was too young. From age six until twelve, Edward experienced anxiety because he was unsure of his salvation. At the age of twelve, Edward joined the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church as a candidate for baptism. Edward was baptized by Rev. C. Cedric Clayborn. This event was significant to Edward because he remembers that he was the last person baptized by Rev. Clayborn before he accepted another church in California.

Edward was very active in youth ministries and programs at the church. He was selected to serve as a team teacher with two others in the Sunday school in his junior year of high school. Edward attended Western Illinois University. While at the university, he experienced a wide range of freedom and began to mature in his leadership abilities. While at Western, Edward was involved in many activities. He was involved in the social

life and student organizations. He was also involved in the Black campus ministry and maintained contact with his home church. In his junior year of college, Edward experienced a personal life crisis and considered suicide because he felt he had let many people down. Edward was delivered from this because of his faith. He looked toward the senior citizens prayer band ministry of his home church for prayer and support.

After graduating from college, Edward returned to his home town. He was very active in his home church, the district association, and state convention. Edward worked as a social worker for the state of Illinois. He served for five years as an executive for the Boy Scouts of America, an intensive drug abuse counselor, and a clinical interventionist in a mental health/drug rehabilitation facility. These efforts helped develop Edward for the call to ministry.

In 1985, Edward answered the call to ministry at the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in East St. Louis, Illinois. After three years he was asked to serve as the assistant to the pastor of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church. In March of 1990, Edward was asked to serve at the Southern Missionary Baptist Church as their pulpit supply until they called a new pastor. Edward's responsibility was to teach bible study and preach when a candidate was not scheduled to preach on a given Sunday. In June of 1990, Edward was called to serve as the pastor of Southern and served in that capacity for nine years.

In the fall of 1998 Dr. William Burwell contacted Edward with regard to a pulpit vacancy in Binghamton, New York. Dr. Burwell stated that the congregation needed someone with a good biblical foundation and a teaching ministry. Edward consented to submit a resume to the church. In October of 1998, Edward's father suddenly passed away. Following the funeral of his father, Edward was asked whether or not he was still interested in being considered as a pastor candidate for the pulpit vacancy in Binghamton.



After an extended pastoral search process that was stopped and then restarted, Edward was called to serve as the pastor of the Beautiful Plain Baptist Church in July of 1999.

He served as pastor-teacher of the church for a period of five years. There was tremendous growth and development during his years of service. Edward led initiatives to remodel the second and third floors of the church building to accommodate anticipated church growth. Through education, training, and preaching Edward was able to lead in revitalizing the church. Edward especially focused on empowering young adults for ministry and developing the youth ministry. Edward initiated a youth church ministry that was growing faster than the congregation. Edward remembers the peak of growth at the church in 2002 when the congregation had to run wires for a video feed of services from the sanctuary to the fellowship hall because of the overflow of attendees. Edward had a very successful tenure as pastor of Beautiful Plain.

In October of 2003 after preaching the closing sermon for the Empire Baptist State Convention, Edward was approached by congress president emeritus Mrs. Inez Womack. She requested his business card. The following Monday, Edward was contacted by the chairman of the deacon board and asked to preach a worship service and conduct baptisms. After discussion with the chairman of deacons, Edward was aware that he was being considered as a potential candidate to fill the pulpit vacancy of the Bethel Baptist Church of White Plains, New York.

After a national pulpit search lasting over two years, Edward was the last and final candidate. On April 24, 2004 Edward was called to serve as the pastor of Bethel. The congregation has the desire to establish a long-tenured relationship with Edward. He is focused upon transforming and revitalizing the church through an emphasis upon developing and implementing a systematic Christian education and discipleship

development program. Edward will use his gifts, skills, knowledge, and abilities to assist the church in preparing to face the challenges and changes associated with life and ministry in the twenty-first century. Key to the success of Edward's efforts will be helping younger members to see the senior members of the congregation as assets rather than liabilities. He also sees an important factor for success as building bridges between generations and helping members to overcome socio-economic barriers and stereotypes that hinder the ability of the church to function as the body of Christ.

### **The Researcher As Change Agent**

At Bethel, the pastor serves a central leadership role in the structure of the congregation. The pastor is seen as a father figure and accorded a high degree of respect and honor from a congregational perspective. Since 1991, two pastors with brief tenures have served the church. Many in the church feel that the church lost its sense of direction and being as a result of these circumstances. The church is seeking to establish a long tenured relationship with the participant researcher and willing to work with him toward achieving that end.

Essential to fulfillment of pastoral duties and responsibilities is the nurture and development of disciples and leadership development according to the mandate given to the church by Christ. It is essential for the pastor or senior pastor to develop other leaders and teachers within the congregation as well as to assist with the work of ministry and the edification of the church body. When training and development are neglected in the church, the church loses its vitality and has a diminished capacity to provide an effective ministry and mission to the people, the community, and the world.

Involvement in the Christian Education and Urban Ministry focus group has allowed research, analysis, and dialogue with a mentor and peers with similar ministry

interests and experiences. Christian education is that function or activity of ministry in the church that undergirds and enhances all other ministries and programs of the church. The focus group has allowed Edward the opportunity for dialogue and discussion regarding challenges faced in his ministry context and developments in the field of Christian education and urban ministry that would impact renewal and revitalization in the traditional Black Baptist Church.

Edward has been challenged to do reading and reflection in areas beyond his area of general comfort. He has been challenged to consider viewpoints of theologians in areas of liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology, and womanist theology which has challenged and brought forth transformation in some of his traditional and fundamentalist views, thus improving his ability to pursue effective ministry strategies in the twenty-first century.

After reading and discussing *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire with the members of the Christian Education and Urban Ministries doctoral studies peer group, Edward gained insight into how education can be used to support and reinforce systems of oppression. A key thought from Freire for Edward's ministry focus and context is found in the following words, "Education is thus constantly remade in praxis. In order to be, it must become."<sup>4</sup> Freire goes on to say,

Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, people know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompleteness. In this incompleteness and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished

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<sup>4</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 84.

character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity.<sup>5</sup>

Edward has seen in his current ministry context how limited Christian education and training has hindered the development of the congregation. He has seen how hierarchical structures have been maintained and an institutional mentality has developed. Edward sees Christian education and leadership training and development that is ongoing and focused upon liberation and empowerment as a means for liberating the congregation from the trappings of tradition and hierarchical systems that have taken away the church's vitality and relevance.

Edward now speaks to the congregation through process language of becoming rather than institutional language of being. The church motto has been modified from "being the church God has called us to be" to "becoming the church God is calling us to be." Edward is currently making a shift in his approach to Christian education and ministry from being objective and detached to becoming subjective and dynamic.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Central to any effective strategy for change in the traditional African American Baptist church is the leadership, support, and involvement of the pastor. The pastor is seen as the shepherd or overseer of the congregation. The pastor is viewed as the religious professional and resident expert divinely called and developed through education and/or experience to care for God's people.

The pastor as described in scripture is a divine gift to the church. The pastor is charged with administrative responsibilities, preaching and teaching responsibilities, and nurture and developmental responsibilities that edify the church. An essential function within the church is the nurturing and development of its members and leadership. It is essential for the pastor to develop other leaders to assist with leadership of the church and the work of ministry.

When the pastor fails to lead in the development and support of the ministry of Christian education and religious training in the traditional Black Baptist Church, the church loses its vitality and has a diminished capacity to provide an effective witness and ministry to the community and the world.

Joe T. Odle writes, "Churches are never stronger than their membership; and a membership of worldly, careless, negligent, stunted Christians will prevent a church from accomplishing much for the Lord. There is a need for every member to be consecrated, trained, and enlisted to active service."<sup>6</sup>

The pastor is the gift given to the church to provide leadership and oversee the nurture, development, and care for the members of the congregation. The pastor in the traditional Black Baptist Church has historically been received and respected as change agent and leader of liberation through the roles of shepherd-leader and prophet for God's

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<sup>6</sup> Joe T. Odle, *Church Members Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press), 8.

people during times of change, oppression, and crisis. The challenge to the traditional African American church in the twenty-first century is to reexamine its role and purpose in the world and to revitalize its life through the process of Christian education and transformation.

The world in which the church exists today is more complex and challenging than previous eras. The church is confronted with the impact of modernity and the development of a post-modern cultural mindset. Challenges have emerged as a result of the impact of the information age and technological advancements. The church is also challenged because of increased mobility due to improved transportation methods and systems that enable constituents to commute to larger geographic areas and seek churches and ministries that meet personal and family needs. The traditional African American church has lost influence and relevance in culture and community because of bondage to traditions and systems of the past that are not able to keep pace with the fast changing pace of modern culture.

Involvement in the Christian Education and Urban Ministry focus group has allowed for exploration of the impact of Christian education as a process in the revitalization of the church and enhancement of its ministry and program activities. Christian education is viewed as that function or activity of the church that under-girds and enhances all other ministries and programs of the church. The focus group has allowed for discussion and examination of various resources in the field as well as dialogue and discussion regarding challenges and available methods for improving the relevance and effectiveness of Christian education in the twenty-first century.

The Christian Education and Urban Ministry focus group not only allows for the opportunity of dialogue but also the opportunity to discuss and process reflections,

observations, and hypotheses. The group allows for problem solving, dialogue, and questioning regarding the subject matter as well as the opportunity to challenge hypotheses and observations that arise in the process of exploring this challenging area of vital importance to the development and future of the church.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL: WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

In 1977 Robert K. Greenleaf published a classic work entitled *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into The Nature Of Legitimate Power And Greatness*. This work and its concerns sowed the initial seeds for the participant researcher to pursue this project. Greenleaf asserted that the demise of institutions toward the end of the twentieth century was the result of a loss of focus of their role in society. Greenleaf charged that the reason for the existence of institutions is to serve society. Greenleaf attributed the demise to the loss of focus of trustees and administrators who became consumed with self-interest and lost the view of servant leadership and the institution as servant in society.

In Chapter Seven, “Servant Leadership In The Church,” Greenleaf writes, “Churches are needed to serve the large numbers of people who need meditative help if their alienation is to be healed and wholeness of life achieved, but I regret that for the most part, churches do not seem to be serving well. They can be helped to do much better. And they can be helped to become servant leaders—by being exemplars for other institutions.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 218 -219.



In this chapter, Greenleaf shares an article which he wrote that appeared in the October 15, 1974 issue of *Friends Journal—Quaker Thought and Life Today*. In the article Greenleaf refers to the exemplary leadership of George Fox. He states,

What makes the tradition from Fox so terribly relevant today is the urgent need, around the world, for leadership by strong ethical persons—those who by nature are disposed to be servants (in the sense of helping others to become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and more likely themselves to be servants) and who therefore can help others to move in constructive directions. Servant-leaders are healers in the sense of making whole by helping others to a larger and nobler vision and purpose than they would be likely to attain for themselves. This, in essence, is how Fox served—as a healer.<sup>2</sup>

Reflection and consideration of the ideals shared by Greenleaf became a common thread and motivation for the participant researcher. The participant researcher sees the development of servant leaders as the primary means for renewal and revitalization of the Black Baptist Church as a relevant institution for healing and hope in the community.

In *Transforming Congregational Culture*, by Anthony B. Robinson, the participant researcher gained insight into the challenges associated with leading change in the congregation. Robinson states, “Response to change the larger cultural change shifts on the part of the once mainline churches will involve change in the culture of congregations. Programmatic change is not enough. Restructuring is not enough. Neither will go deep enough.”<sup>3</sup>

Robinson argues that, due to the magnitude of change experienced in culture and society, there is an adaptive challenge for change confronting the church. Leaders are

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony B. Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 12.

required to ask the right questions and provide spiritual direction in the midst of a time of confusion, chaos, and uncertainty for the long established church.

Robinson states,

Generally what has happened in long-established congregations is that mission and purpose has gotten lost or become confused with maintaining the church as an organization. Maintaining and surviving—and keeping the membership satisfied—have tended to become what we are trying to accomplish, even if we are unaware of it, even if we pay lip service to other goals and values. Any other, or any very clear, sense of mission or purpose has been eclipsed. That this is the case is all the more reason for those who would offer leadership in the face of adaptive challenge to ask questions as they seek to give direction to the life of the congregation.<sup>4</sup>

Reading Chapter Seven of Robinson's work, "From Board Culture To Ministry Culture," helped to guide the participant researcher in developing this project. This reading led the researcher to consult Rick Warren's work *The Purpose Driven Church*<sup>5</sup> and works by author Gene Getz, *Sharpening The Focus of The Church*<sup>6</sup> and *The Measure of a Church*.<sup>7</sup>

Warren's work, *The Purpose Driven Church*, focuses on church growth and development using a seeker sensitive approach. Based upon the Great Commission in Matt. 28:19-20 and The Commandment in Matt. 22:37-40, Warren develops five purposes to direct church growth and ministry development. Warren sees "purpose" as the primary motivation behind church organization, growth, and development.

In contrast, Gene Getz takes a biblical-historical approach to understanding the church in both works. Getz sees church organization as developing and emerging through

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>5</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Gene A. Getz, *Sharpening The Focus Of The Church* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1984).

discernment activities utilizing the lenses of scripture, history, and culture. Getz develops principles and guidelines for church organization, structure, and leadership based upon scriptural foundations.

Glen Martin and Gary McIntosh wrote an insightful work, *The Issachar Factor*.<sup>8</sup> This work is based upon 1 Chronicles 12:32. It emphasizes the need of church leaders to be like the men of the tribe of Issachar who had a sense of understanding of times and providing leadership and direction to Israel. It encourages the modern day church leader to be aware of trends and changes that impact the church. Awareness of trends becomes an aid in strategic planning for the future of the church.

George Barna wrote two works that were beneficial to the participant researcher in preparation for completion of this project. Barna is a researcher with a passion for the church. He is concerned with using research data and findings to aid the church in development and transformational endeavors to maintain relevancy and effectiveness in the twenty-first century. The first work of Barna's reviewed was *The Second Coming of the Church*. Barna, on the basis of reviewing research data and observation of trends, assesses the current condition of the church and then pronounces prescriptive remedies for the church to maintain relevance and effectiveness in a new era.

Another valuable tool utilized by the researcher from Barna and the Barna Research group was *African-Americans and Their Faith*.<sup>9</sup> This research report on the faith, culture, values, and lifestyles of African-Americans is based on survey data collected between 1996 and 1999. It contains valuable demographic and background

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<sup>7</sup> Getz, *The Measure of a Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001).

<sup>8</sup>Glen Martin and Gary McIntosh, *The Issachar Factor* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993).

information on African-Americans and some comparisons with other ethnic groups. This research information helped the researcher remain cognizant of the faith and cultural differences that need to be considered when evaluating resources and recommendations based on observations from different faith backgrounds and cultures.

George Barna and Harry R. Jackson, Jr. collaborated on a work entitled, *High Impact African-American Churches*. Chapter 2, “Black Church Leadership” was a valuable resource providing an historical perspective and rationale for leadership development in the Black Church. They provided nine strategies that enable life-changing ministry.<sup>10</sup> Barna and Jackson discuss the benefit of not micromanaging ministry with the following comment, “There may be some historical reasons for the tendency to avoid micromanaging, too. Many of the current black church leadership structures have their roots in the rural, southern, post-Civil War environment in which the black church flourished. Most rural communities could not afford a full-time pastor. Thus, while the hired pastor did the preaching and other ceremonial duties, the board of deacons ran the day-to-day affairs of the church.”<sup>11</sup> This statement serves as a reference to understanding levels of conflict between the board and sometimes the pastor within the ministry context of this project.

To gain a greater understanding of the context of ministry and historical background for this project, the following sources were consulted. *The First Urban Christian* by Wayne A. Meeks<sup>12</sup> provided a perspective on the social life and early

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<sup>9</sup> The Barna Institute, *African-Americans and Their Faith* (Oxnard, CA: The Barna Institute, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> George Barna and Harry R. Jackson, Jr., *High Impact African-American Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2004), 46-66.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>12</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

development of the church. This work examined the church from the basis of historical, archeological, and sociological findings. The urban perspective provided a means of linking the struggles of the urban church today with the struggles the early Christian of Paul's era.

Two works were used to gain a greater understanding of the unique dynamics of the modern day church. *One Church Four Generations* by Gary L. McIntosh provided insight and perspective into the uniqueness of having four generational eras composing the church congregation. Each generation has special needs and concerns, so ministries and programs should be developed accordingly. The second work, *Creating a Healthier Church* by Ronald W. Richardson <sup>13</sup> provided a Family Systems Theory approach to understanding church relationships and dynamics. This work helped the participant researcher to understand the dominance of the emotional system at work in causing tensions and frustration in the ministry context.

*Church Administration in the Black Perspective* by Floyd Massey, Jr. and Samuel B. McKinney is an excellent resource for background information regarding the organization and structure of the traditional Black Baptist Church. Key chapters focus on traditional power patterns and the role of the pastor in the Black Baptist Church.<sup>14</sup> A similar resource is *Images Of The Black Preacher*<sup>15</sup> by H. Beecher Hicks, Jr. This resource gives an historical view of the Black Preacher and an introspective look into his (or her) personal life and role in the church and community.

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<sup>13</sup> Ronald W. Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Floyd Massey, Jr. and Samuel Berry McKinney, *Church Administration in the Black Perspective* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1976).

<sup>15</sup> H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., *Images Of The Black Preacher* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1977).

In *Preaching to the Black Middle Class* by Marvin A. McMickle,<sup>16</sup> a perspective is given on the rise and development of the Black Middle Class. This work forms a narrative for challenging the Black Middle Class to maintain concern for the inner city and churches within them that serve as sources of hope and stability. This book can also serve as a tool for reaching a younger generation and the more affluent Black Middle Class members who have left the traditional churches of the inner city. Another resource that helps one understand the importance of the Black Church to the community is *Lay My Burden Down* by Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint and Amy Alexander.<sup>17</sup> In this work the suicide and mental health crisis affecting the Black Community is analyzed in terms of the breakdown of the black community and significant institutions that served as safety nets and places of hope and refuge open to the disturbed and distressed.

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<sup>16</sup> Marvin A. McMickle, *Preaching to the Black Middle Class* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D. and Amy Alexander, *Lay My Burden Down* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2000).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: WHERE DO WE BEGIN?**

Christian education is the key to church revitalization and ministry enhancement. Christian education is the function or task of the church whereby faith is nurtured and developed in the individual and the corporate community. In recent decades, the traditional African American church has lost its position of influence and relevance in culture and society in general because of a weakened approach to the task of Christian education, nurture, and development that has not kept pace with the advancement and the development of increased literacy and affluence of many of its constituents.

Eleanor A. Daniel and John W. Wade in their preface to their book *Foundations for Christian Education* write,

Christian education is at the heart of ministry. The New Testament clearly instructs believers and the church to teach, baptize, and then teach some more. Through the centuries Christian education has taken on many different forms and has been accomplished by the church in a variety of ways. When the church has been faithful to the task of Christian education, then it has been strong. But when the church has failed in its mission to teach, it has been weak.<sup>1</sup>

Based upon the reading of *Foundations For Christian Education* by Eleanor Daniel and John W. Wade, the researcher adopted the following philosophical concepts regarding foundations for Christian education: 1) For Christian education processes to be considered Christian there must be biblical and theological content and emphasis; and 2)

Christian education processes must be concerned with producing change, transformation, and development in individuals and the faith community to produce Christian qualities.

Colleen Birchett writes, “As the black church moved into the twentieth century, one of the greatest problems it faced was uneducated clergymen . . . These clergymen continued to magnify the importance of preaching but de-emphasized the importance of teaching and teacher training agencies within the church.”<sup>2</sup>

As a result of her research Birchett concluded that the black church has evolved without the benefit of “a formalized, more structured religious education plan.”<sup>3</sup> The current need is for a greater emphasis upon religious education and leadership training in traditional African American Baptist Churches.

Birchett’s conclusions are consistent with the following statement from Dr. J. Michael Shannon in his writing entitled, *The Minister And Christian Education*:

Ministers often decry the biblical ignorance and lack of commitment seen in many church members. It is doubtful that these problems can be adequately addressed from the pulpit alone. For Christians to grow, they need exactly what the Christian education program offers, the give and take of the class along with the extra biblical input and opportunity for feedback gives both long-time and new believers opportunity for growth.<sup>4</sup>

The traditional African American Baptist Church has lost influence and relevance in culture and community because of its bondage to traditions and systems of the past that

<sup>1</sup> Eleanor A. Daniel and John W. Wade, eds., preface to *Foundations For Christian Education* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Colleen Birchett, “A History of Religious Education in the Black Church,” in *Urban Church Education*, ed. Harold W. Burgess (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 2001), 71-83.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> J. Michael Shannon, “The Minister And Christian Education,” in *Foundations For Christian Education*, ed. Eleanor A. Daniel and John W. Wade (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 359.



are no longer able to keep pace with the changes and challenges of a new postmodern culture.

To serve this present age, members of congregations and church leaders must equip themselves through education and training to meet the new needs and challenges of the twenty-first century. In the traditional African American Baptist Church, the pastor must be the catalyst developing, promoting, and leading in the implementation of Christian education systems and programs to meet changing needs and produce transformation.

Challenges have emerged as a result of the impact of the information age and technological advancements. The church is also challenged because of increased mobility due to improved transportation methods and systems that enable constituents to commute to larger geographic areas and seek churches and ministries that meet personal and family needs. The traditional African American church has lost influence and relevance in culture and community because of bondage to traditions and systems of the past that are not able to keep pace with the fast changing pace of modern culture.

To understand the ways in which Christian education can revitalize the church, one must be sure to have an understanding of the subject. To educate means to develop the faculties and powers of a person through instruction or schooling. To educate means to qualify by instruction or training for a particular calling or practice. To educate means to impart knowledge or to provide information.

Education is the process of educating. Education is the act or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge and of developing the powers of reasoning and judgment. Education is the result produced by instruction, training, or study. The focus of education

today must shift from the emphasis upon sharing knowledge to the acquisition of knowledge with the outcome being change or transformation in the learner.

There must also be a concern for viewing education from the aspect of being Christian in nature. For education to be considered Christian there must be biblical and theological content and emphasis. Christian education is therefore concerned with producing change, transformation, and development in individuals and the faith community to produce Christian qualities.

### **Biblical Foundation**

In the traditional African American Church tradition, the Bible has served as the primary source for guiding church development and individual spiritual formation. Biblical foundations and principles have directed the church in its approach to ministry, missions, and administration. Although there may be many opinions and interpretations regarding the teachings and principles of scripture, few in the traditional African American Church deny the value of the Bible as the source or foundation providing guidance to individuals and the church.

Paul's admonition to his protégé Timothy has been echoed as a focal passage for the divine directive of accepting the Bible as the foundation for Christian education and the Church's source for guidance and development in faith. In 2 Timothy 2:16-17 Paul writes, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (KJV)

The above passage, according to most scholars, appears to have been written by Paul at a late stage of his life while imprisoned in Rome. The tone of this pastoral epistle seems to point toward an imminent threat of impending death. Paul in writing the epistle

to Timothy is writing as a father to a son. He reminds him of the faith entrusted to him and the responsibility of continuing the transmitting of the faith through teaching and establishing church order. He emphasizes that the primary tool for transmitting the faith is the Scriptures that are the inspired word of God serving as the foundations for doctrinal beliefs and instruction in the church.

### **New Testament Foundation**

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets,  
some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping  
of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body  
of Christ . . . (Eph 4:11-12 NKJV)

In the traditional African American Baptist Church, the Bible has served as the primary source for guiding the church. Bill Leonard writes the following regarding Baptists:

From the beginning of their movement, Baptists affirmed the centrality of Scripture as the primary authority for the individual and church. They were concerned that their teachings be drawn only from Scripture, with particular authority given to the New Testament. Baptists often refer to themselves as “People of the Book,” bound by the Word of God as revealed in the written Word, Holy Scripture, and the living Word, Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Paul’s admonition to his protégé Timothy has been seen as a focal passage for the historical acceptance by the traditional African American Baptist Church of the Bible as the foundation for Christian education and the Church’s source for guidance and development in faith. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul writes,

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NKJV)

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<sup>5</sup> Bill J. Leonard, ed., *Dictionary of Baptists in America* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 4.

The researcher's foundational biblical text for understanding his ministry focus and context is found in the words of Ephesians 4: 11-12. He will approach this project utilizing an action research methodology. He will serve as an investigator and participant from the role of pastor serving as a change agent or catalyst to promote change in the traditional African American Baptist Church.

It is argued by some modern scholars that Ephesians is not an authentic letter authored by Paul. Harold W. Hoehner in the *Knowledge Bible Commentary* writes,

Yet, the Pauline authorship of Ephesians has been greatly disputed in recent years. Some critics think that the book reflects aspects of vocabulary, style, and doctrine that differ from Paul's writing. Though the book has a close affinity with Colossians, critics claim that Ephesians is uncharacteristic of Paul. They suggest that the book was pseudonymous, that is, it was written by someone who did not use his own name.<sup>6</sup>

D. A. Carson, Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris in their *Introduction To The New Testament* state, "But many scholars are not persuaded by such considerations. (Arguments presented regarding authenticity.) They hold that the evidence points to someone other than Paul as writer."<sup>7</sup> Carson, Moo, and Morris discuss five reasons for questioning the authenticity of Ephesians, 1) the theology; 2) the language; 3) the style; 4) the view of apostles and apostolic tradition; and 5) the relationship and comparison with Colossians.<sup>8</sup>

In his book entitled *Doing Church*, Aubrey Malphurs emphasizes the importance of sound hermeneutical practices and the reliance upon the epistles and narratives of the

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<sup>6</sup> John F. Walvord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Knowledge Bible Commentary* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1983), 613.

<sup>7</sup> D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction To The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 307-308.

New Testament for the development and leading of church ministries. He states, “The pastor needs to know the epistles and their historical context well in order to develop a sound ecclesiology. . . . They (epistles) are indispensable to any clergyman who wants to know what God says about the church and its ministry.”<sup>9</sup>

The researcher has turned to the work of Calvin J. Roetzel to gain a greater understanding of Pauline letters and the social and historical context surrounding these New Testament books. Roetzel upon analysis of the text and comparison with Colossians and with other texts determined to be Pauline makes the following statement, “If Colossians is judged to be deuterio-Pauline and the author of Ephesians relies on Colossians, then it follows that Ephesians is also deuterio-Pauline”<sup>10</sup>

Roetzel continues his argument against Pauline authorship by analyzing the language, style, and theology of Ephesians. He notes that an analysis of the language used places the letter at the post-apostolic period, 80-100 C.E. He notes the stylistic difference between Ephesians and Paul’s undisputed letters. He also notes major differences in theology in regards to eschatology, view of the church, and understanding of apostleship.<sup>11</sup>

Most valuable within the researcher’s ministry context and his development of a ministry project is the observation that Ephesians resembles a religious tract. Roetzel places Ephesians within a specified social and historical context and sees the writer as

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Doing Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999), 53.

<sup>10</sup> Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul Conversations in Context* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 141.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 142-143.

addressing two primary problems, the Gentile majority's acceptance of a Jewish Christian minority and the influence of Gnosticism or some popular religion of the day.

Ephesians then becomes an instructional response to challenges of the church.

Roetzel then uses information from modern scholars to arrive at the conclusion that the writer gathers from a collection of letters from Paul and other sources to respond to challenges to the church. Roetzel writes the following conclusion,

Most scholars agree that the paraenetic material comes from many sources, but our author fashioned the material to emphasize the importance of unity, order, and mutual respect. In a characteristic Pauline fashion, the closing reaffirms the major concern of the letter. There the church is urged to reaffirm its support for Paul (through prayer) and the mystery (the unity of the church) (6:18-20).<sup>12</sup>

With the view of Roetzel established, the foundational text of Ephesians 4 can be examined. After laying doctrinal and theological foundations, the writer moves to praxis based upon understanding. He uses the Greek word "*axios*" to describe how the church must reaffirm the implications of its theology. The church's walk must be consistent or balanced with its calling. The image is that of a scale with what God has done on one side and the actions of believers on the other. Unity becomes the guiding theme or principle for the church.

Next the writer in verses 4-6 emphasizes that there is a unity to be preserved.

Carson, Moo, and Morrison state,

There is a unity that believers should strive to preserve (4:3); indeed, Paul draws attention to a whole series of unities, including one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father, one body and one hope, one faith, one baptism (4:4-6), even though there are diverse gifts of apostles, prophets, and others in the church (4:11-13). Clearly the writer wants his readers to catch the splendid vision of one church, thoroughly united in the Lord, though it contains members

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 147.

of various races and is equipped by God to render significant service to the world.<sup>13</sup>

Based upon the above understanding and reading of the text, one discovers that God gives the gift of unity and then gives gifts to maintain and enhance the development of that unity to individuals and the church. First it is noted that there is a general dispersion of gifts or divine enablements for individuals to function within the church as the body of Christ. Then the author presents an Old Testament quotation with some revision based upon Psalm 68:18. These gifts spoken of are won by a triumphant monarch and then distributed to men. In this use the writer sees the gifts given to the church

Specifically, the author lists gifted individuals given to the church in Ephesians 4:11. Wolvard and Zuck draw the following conclusion,

The purpose of the gifted believers (vv. 7-11) is to equip other believers for the ministry so as to give them stability doctrinally and practically and thus lead them to mutual edification.

The key Greek word that leads to this assumption is “*katartismos*” from the verb “*katartizo*.” “*Katartismos*” meant to perfect, to complete, or to equip. It can carry the idea of preparation for use. The word was used of sailors mending nets and doctors setting bones. John Phillips uses Hebrews 10:5 where the word is used to describe “preparation” of an earthly body as a vehicle for Christ. Phillips states,

The thought then behind the word *katartismos* is that of making something fully ready, of perfectly equipping someone, of fully preparing something. The proper use of the gifts is to bring the body of Christ to its full potential.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>14</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1993), 119.

The researcher is pastor and teacher in the ministry context and for the purpose of this project. He sees himself fulfilling the role of pastor and teacher. Although in the text there is the possibility for interpreting the description of two separate and distinct gifted individuals, Edward believes he is gifted to fill both responsibilities. In his role as pastor and teacher he will seek to restore and preserve the unity in the ministry context by equipping saints within the body who also have gifts to do the work of ministry. By effectively performing this function in the ministry context, Edward believes church revitalization will occur as church leaders and members of the congregation are equipped to do works of ministry and service in the world.

### **Old Testament Foundation**

So the LORD said to Moses: Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you.

Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. (Numbers 11:16-17 NKJV)

Walter Brueggemann in his work *The Bible Makes Sense* presents a “covenant-historical” model for understanding the Bible. Brueggemann states,

The Bible with its deep grip on “sense” speaks into the void and fills the yearning of humaneness in a way that is thick with fidelity . . . Thus the sense-making of the Bible does not fit in but contradicts, transforms, and summons to a new life. What is revealed in this sense-yielding revelation is not a new teaching of conclusions but a new way of living that is filled with joy.<sup>15</sup>

Brueggemann sees Numbers 11: 16-17 as part of an expanded narrative of the wilderness journey of God’s People based upon the primal story of the Exodus. The

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *The Bible Makes Sense* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), ix.



Exodus is the central story of liberation and redemption by which the nation Israel is formed as God's people. The stories and experiences of God's people are maintained, shaped, expanded, and retold to succeeding generations to testify of God's interaction with and fidelity to a people that God invited to share in a covenant relationship involving mutual fidelity and commitment. God manifested God's self initially through public theophanies demonstrating God's concern, power, and might expressed in regard to God's people.

Brueggemann describes Numbers 11:16-17 as being a part of the literature of institutionalization. Brueggemann states,

Of course every enduring community, including those formed in the zeal of a fresh religious commitment, must organize its life to preserve its initial intent; to guard against perversion, to define the structure of order, the role of leadership, and the scope of freedom; and to deal with specific internal problems and concerns. The literature reporting these facets of the history of the community we may call *literature of institutionalization*, which is often several generations removed from the original leadership, for only then do such problems surface with their full import and danger.<sup>16</sup>

Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard in their work *Introduction To Biblical Interpretation* state, "A more common OT genre is the *heroic narrative*. This consists of a series of episodes that focus on the life and exploits of a hero whom people later consider significant enough to remember. Typically such heroic narratives include some account of the person's birth, marriage, life work, and death. They place particular emphasis on the hero's displays of virtue and extraordinary heroism . . . The life of Moses (Exodus-Deuteronomy) offers the best OT example of his genre."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>17</sup> William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction To Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1993).

The context for understanding this narrative is the beginning of the first leg of the journey from Mt. Sinai. The people complained against YAHWEH resulting in a response of wrath and fire raining on the outskirts of the camp. The people cry out to Moses and he intercedes leading to a ceasing of this divine judgment. Moses is seen as a primary mediator between God and God's people during the formative years in the history of Israel.

This story is placed at the close of the literature of institutionalization as a means of legitimizing the leadership role of Moses as God's representative. It also supports the development of a leadership support team for Moses and the people of God. In response to Moses' appeal regarding being overburdened, God instructs Moses to select seventy elders to assist with the leadership responsibilities. God legitimizes this action by allowing God's Spirit to rest upon the elders including two within the camp who failed to report to the tent of meeting.

Norman Gottwald uses a historical-critical approach to understanding the use of Moses in the Old Testament. He states, "Moses is presented as a deliverer of his people from bondage who also led them through the first phases of their new life of freedom. All our information about him comes from narrative literature of a history-like quality that stops short of being an actual historiography."<sup>18</sup>

Gottwald, in attempting to reconstruct a historical Moses figure, concludes that there was in all probability an actual group leader who became the force around which the traditions developed. Gottwald concludes that traditions developed around this figure

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<sup>18</sup> Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible A Socio-Literary Introduction*, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 193.

and states, “No doubt many of the Moses traditions about his leadership are intended to legitimate certain offices and functions later in Israel.”<sup>19</sup>

Gottwald acknowledges that complex editing has occurred when one analyzes the weaving of sagas and narratives around the exodus and wanderings. The passage in Numbers 11 is identified with the E source. This is significant when one notes that according to Gottwald, “the ‘Elohim-Horeb-Amorites-Jethro’ sections show a more reserved deity who communicates by dreams and visions, and stresses the danger of apostasy from foreign nations and the extraordinary demands of religious loyalty.”<sup>20</sup>

Moses is portrayed through the traditions as a model leader and legitimates the delegation of leadership function and organization for the people of God. This allows for the participant to utilize this text as a foundation for understanding the role of pastor as being able to delegate leadership responsibility and train leaders to function in leadership capacities.

### **Theological Foundation**

The researcher utilized the theological grounding of Black Theology based upon the writings of James Cone. Black theology holds the key to returning relevance and meaning to the Black Church in inner-city communities. Black Theology emerged from the struggles and experiences of Black people. Black Theology is concerned with liberation of the oppressed. Black theology views the gospel as the message of liberation and sees the message incarnate in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 12.

James Cone emphatically states that Black Theology although agreeing in principle with contemporary theology that defines revelation in terms of self-disclosure goes a step further. He states,

Revelation is God's self-disclosure to humankind in the context of liberation. To know God is to know God's work of liberation in behalf of the oppressed. God's revelation means liberation, emancipation from death-dealing political, economic, and social structures of society. This is the essence of biblical revelation.<sup>21</sup>

Cone states that the church is a liberating community with a threefold task: 1) to proclaim the reality of divine liberation, 2) to actively share in the struggle for liberation of the poor and oppressed, and 3) to serve as a fellowship or community visibly manifesting the reality of the gospel.<sup>22</sup>

This understanding of the church forms the framework for the participant to pursue the ultimate goal of leading the congregation of the ministry context through the transformative process from institutional maintenance toward a ministry focus. Enabling the congregation to make this paradigm shift in theological thinking will aid in the process of church renewal and revitalization.

J. I. Packer states, "Godliness means responding to God's revelation in trust and obedience, faith and worship, prayer and praise, submission and service. Life must be seen and lived in the light of God's Word. This, and nothing else is true religion."<sup>23</sup> Packer's argument rests upon an experiential knowledge of God and not knowledge about God. The theological thrust of this project must be based upon helping participants

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<sup>21</sup> James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 45.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 130-131.

<sup>23</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 22.

experience or encounter God in order to lead to transformation, liberation and development.

Olivia Pearl Stokes writes, “The value of understanding black theology for all religious educators is that it may provide some new theological insight, from the black perspective into the contemporary search for the truth found in the gospel.”<sup>24</sup> Stokes gives the following definition of black theology as shared by Joseph A. Johnson of the Christian Methodist Church, “Black theology is a systematic interpretation of the meaning and significance of the Christian faith for the worshiping, witnessing, and proclaiming black Christian community.”<sup>25</sup>

As the researcher evaluated the theological insights of Cone and the conclusions of Stokes regarding black theology, he determined that black theology would serve as his theological foundation for ministry and this project. Black theology does not seek to indoctrinate, it provides opportunity for questioning, making inferences, and allows the opportunity for the selection of lifestyle choices. Black theology holds the key of returning relevance to the black church and enabling the black church to once again impact the lifestyles of individuals and the community. Black theology is experiential or situational and not abstract or irrelevant to black people or the condition of the poor. Black theology seeks to help individuals discover and develop an understanding of God and how God relates to the world and creation. Through the gospels and the truth of Jesus individuals are liberated and transformed. This theological foundation will lead to desired change and revitalization in the ministry context.

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<sup>24</sup> Olivia Pearl Stokes, “Black Theology: A Challenge To Religious Education,” in *Religious Education and Theology*, ed. Norma H. Thompson, (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1982), 71.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 72.

Upon a close reading and analysis of New Testament writings, one soon discovers that the Old Testament serves as the foundation for the New Testament. Religious instruction and subsequent Christian education is a continuation of admonitions and directives found in the Old Testament as God forms a nation or people for himself to serve as witnesses and testimony to the world.

It is noted that God develops and forms God's people through instruction or law and experience or encounter. For the purpose of Christian education and religious instruction it is good to realize that the Scriptures are not just a depository of faith, but a vital book of instructions, principles, and experiences to be utilized in the process of spiritual development for both individuals and the community of the people of God.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY: HOW DO WE GET TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE?

Shawchuck and Heuser in *Leading the Congregation* state,

Pastors, through sometimes hard lessons, eventually recognize that the effectiveness of their ministry depends on the effectiveness of the governing board. A major role of the pastor, therefore, is to equip the board, helping them become competent and effective in their leadership.<sup>1</sup>

The researcher after observation and consultation with professional associates and context associates determined that the best approach to initiating renewal and revitalization in the ministry context would be to develop a church board training model. This was based upon an action research based model of inquiry.

The challenge facing the researcher was to design, develop, and implement a training model that would transform the existing church board from a change inhibitor to a change supporter. The researcher utilized qualitative research methods of survey, interview, and observation to measure the effectiveness of this project. The researcher believed that the implementation of the training model would impact the attitude and perceptions of existing church board members, thereby transforming the church board from a change inhibitor to a change supporter.

McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead state,

Authentic research is where you do not already have the answers. Authentic research adds to this the idea that what you find out is

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<sup>1</sup> Shawchuck and Heuser, *Leading the Congregation*, 201-202.

going to make you change what you are doing, both mentally and in the practical world. In this sense it incorporates action that is informed, committed, and intentional. It means that you are willing and able to change your own understanding of the issue that you are researching and that you will work to bring about practical changes outside your own practice also.<sup>2</sup>

The researcher chose an action research method and qualitative analysis in this ministry context because of his desire to affirm and empower the participants as stakeholders in the process. Through this methodology the researcher believes that the needs of the participants and the needs of the organization will be met.

Greenwood and Levin state,

AR (action research) is social research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and members of an organization or community seeking to improve their situation. AR promotes broad participation in the research process and supports action leading to a more just or satisfying situation for the stakeholders.<sup>3</sup>

The researcher was aware that the majority of the participants in the project had served for several years in their respective leadership capacities demonstrating commitment and dedication to the organization. The researcher also realized that participants came from a wide range of socio-economic classes and that many were limited in the literacy skills and academic attainment necessary for more quantitative forms of inquiry and study.

In *Research In Ministry*, William R. Myers discusses research methods for D.Min. projects. He uses the term “pro-active” research method as that well suited to the ministry. He states, “The proactive research method intentionally engages in qualitative

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<sup>2</sup> Jean McNiff, Pamela Lomax, and Jack Whitehead, *You and Your Action Research Project* (London: Routledge, 1996), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 4.



research while pro-actively working toward transformation. In the method the researcher is passionately involved with the practice being evaluated.”<sup>4</sup>

Based upon the above criteria, a Christian leadership-training model was developed. The model included six training modules to be led by the researcher. The initial training session included obtaining consent and administering a pre-training survey to obtain participant background information and evaluate training needs and project focus. This phase of planning conformed to the action planning process described by McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead.<sup>5</sup>

The preliminary survey was an essential part of the development of the project. The researcher designed a survey that began with the collection of demographic information regarding participants. This data would be used in the field experience to determine if there were any patterns associated with particular groups of participants that could be observed.

The second section of the preliminary session contained closed-end questions to gain background information regarding the training and experiences of participants. Participants were to give yes or no responses to eight questions regarding whether they had served on the boards of organizations, held other leadership positions in other organizations or in the church, and whether or not they had participated in other leadership training programs.

Question number ten was designed to allow participants to express their opinion and perceptions of training needs. The participants were given seventeen training options and an option of “other” with a blank to insert another area of need in order to rank from

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<sup>4</sup> William R. Meyers, *Research in Ministry* (third edition) (Chicago, IL: Exploration Press, 2002), 25.

<sup>5</sup> McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead, *You and Your Action Research Project*, 36ff.

one to ten with one being most important and ten being least important of the designated areas of training. Data from this question would be used to review and modify training modules to meet the needs of the participants. This would affirm the use of an action research methodology and Cranton's transformational learning theory for adult learning.

A final section was available for additional comments and provided space for participants to respond to an additional open-ended question regarding participant goals for the outcome of the training process. A copy of the preliminary survey and responses is included in the appendix for the reader to review. The preliminary survey was administered to fourteen participants in the first in-service training session.

Following development and administration of the preliminary survey, training modules were developed utilizing resources and information obtained during the review of literature and in consultation with context associates, professional associates, mentor, and peers. Two primary texts were selected for the course: *Leading Leaders* by Aubrey Malphurs and *Spiritual Leadership* by Oswald Sanders. Training modules were reviewed and handouts were developed and then implemented.

A second instrument was used in session three of the training project. This was a modified version of "The Church Board Audit" recommended by Aubrey Malphurs.<sup>6</sup> This instrument provided information regarding the participants' perceptions of board functioning and perceived health of the board. This instrument contained twenty questions and sought participant responses according to a scale with one meaning true and four meaning false. This instrument was used for a teaching and discussion tool for session three after gathering participant responses. This instrument and participant responses are included in the appendix for the reader to review.

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<sup>6</sup> Malphurs, *Leading Leaders*, 125-126.

A post training survey was developed to measure the participants' perception of the impact and value of the training project. The post-training survey also sought to determine potential application of training concepts in board meetings and areas of training to be pursued in the future. This survey included seven questions with a scale for responses and space for comments by participants. This survey also included three open-ended questions to be addressed by respondents. The post training survey and responses to questions one through seven are included in the appendix for the reader to review.

Central to the project were interviews with context associates and observations of training sessions and church board meetings. The participant researcher also had three of the sessions videotaped for review and analysis. Informal interviews and feedback from participants were also shared with the participant researcher.

At the conclusion of the project, a debriefing session was held soliciting verbal feedback. During this session, responses to the training were shared. There was also feedback, comments, and concerns shared regarding the need for future training and development as well as the need to implement new practices and procedures as a result of the training.

### **Outline of Research Method:**

Hypothesis: If church board members would receive adequate training, the church board would be transformed from a change inhibitor and a change supporter working with the pastor for church renewal and revitalization.

Intervention: An action research based leadership-training model consisting of six training modules focusing upon the role of the church board and Christian leadership principles.

- Session #1 Introduction to The Purpose of Leadership Training
  - The session focused upon detailing the purpose of leadership training and discussing training objectives. The pre-training survey was administered and consent forms and agreements obtained.
- Session #2 Why Boards and Committees Exist
  - This session focused on lecture and discussion of why board and committees exist. Biblical foundations were laid and the church board was defined and described.
- Sessions #3 Improving Church Board Functioning
  - This board discussed the composition of church boards and the qualifications for church board members. This session focused upon improving board functioning. The church board performance assessment survey was administered and discussed.

- Session #4 Introduction To Christian Leadership – Part I
  - This session focused on lecture and discussion of leadership principles. Leadership was defined and various aspects of leadership were discussed.
- Sessions #5 Introduction To Christian Leadership – Part II
  - This session emphasized leadership from a Christian perspective. Leadership was analyzed from the basis of service and the spiritual nature of Christian leadership.
- Session #6 Becoming A Twenty-first Century Leadership Team
  - This session was a wrap-up and evaluation session. The importance of becoming a leadership team was discussed. Strategies and concepts for leadership in the twenty-first century were introduced. This session was highlighted by open discussion of the impact of the training and future directions. The training project concluded with participants completing a post training survey.

Research Design: Conduct a needs analysis by meeting with key leaders, professional associates, and context associates. Determine project focus and target group. Define problem and objectives of project. Obtain consent, commitment, and cooperation of research participants. Research and develop curriculum and materials to meet training objectives. Develop training plan and schedule. Evaluate and redesign project based upon stated needs of participants. Implement project. Evaluate project.

Measurement: Conduct preliminary survey. Videotape training sessions. Observe actions and behaviors of participants following training sessions. Conduct brief interviews and journal responses. Conduct post-training survey. Analyze data.

Instrumentation: Develop Consent form, Preliminary survey and Post training survey.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FIELD EXPERIENCE: WHAT WAS THE JOURNEY LIKE?

Seminaries don't train pastors in board governance, and lay people are seldom exposed to such an approach, even those in the corporate world. Thus most churches rely on board tradition—how they've done it in the past—"the way we do things around here." Some may borrow from another church or do it the way they did in the last church. The problem with this is that each church has a different culture and what may (or may not) work for one doesn't necessarily work for the other. And to compound the problem, boards and the committees that are supposed to serve them can harbor power people who attempt to take control and run the church the way they think is best.

Aubrey Malphurs<sup>1</sup>

Central to the effectiveness of this project has been the acknowledgment of the church leadership as well as the congregation of the need for change and training. This general consensus paved the way for openness to initial inquiries and openness to efforts to develop and implement the project.

The process began with studying the ministry context to discover factors impacting the ability to initiate and implement change in the context. The researcher discovered that the primary decision making unit and power and authority of the organization was entrusted to the church board.

Initial observations revealed that within the church board there was a continuous struggle between the two bodies, the deacons and the trustees, who had been merged into

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<sup>1</sup> Malphurs, *Leading Leaders*, 15.

one church governing board. Both groups believed they were independent governing bodies and therefore held power and decision-making authority over the other.

It is apparent that, historically, the power resided in the pastor and the deacons. In recent years, power has shifted as a result of an alliance and maneuvering between the trustees and the previous pastor. The adversarial role of these two groups is physically depicted in the position of designated boxed assigned seating areas in the front of the church with the two groups facing each other during services.

Since the retirement of the last long-tenured pastor in 1991, Bethel has maintained tenuous but civil existence. Conflict and tension has increased between leaders who make up the church board due to differences resulting from newly discovered affluence, academic attainment, socio-economic status and gender-based biases of the church board members.

Generational conflicts have also emerged leading to verbal challenges and charges of disrespect and a lack of trust among board members. There have been battles for control and power due to poor training, the lack of clear policies and procedures, and the absence of unifying goals and objectives. The church has been operating according to traditions and actions of the past and on the basis of oral traditions and personal viewpoints usually restricted to the selective memory of current church board members.

Key to the success of this project was to convince the church board that it is one body composed of church members sharing equal status and unified around common goals and objectives. This leadership-training model also sought to convince church board members that they serve as part of a leadership team working with the pastor and ministerial staff to support and implement changes necessary to bring about congregational renewal and revitalization.



### **The Project Begins: Session I**

The project-training model was implemented over a period of approximately twelve weeks. On July 26, 2005, the first training session was held. The participants in the project-training model were identified, signed consent forms, and were given a preliminary survey to provide demographic information for the group and to assess training needs prior to the beginning training sessions.

The first session focused upon the topic, “The Purpose of Leadership Training.” This session was designed to discuss training goals and objectives, to obtain commitments from participants as stakeholders in the process, and to administer the pre training survey. The first session was held on the night of a church board meeting. The members of the church board were present. The time commitments were discussed and the format of the training modules was presented. There are nineteen members of the church board. Fourteen members agreed to participate in the training project and completed the necessary consent forms. The lecture and discussion material was presented. At the end of the session, the pre-training survey was administered to the group. Because of the literacy skills of some of the participants, time was taken to explain questions and assist those individuals with challenges in completion of the survey form.

The preliminary survey data became a tool in the action research methodology utilized by the researcher. The demographic information indicated that there were fourteen project participants. There were three female participants and eleven male participants. Five program participants were deacons. Two program participants were trustees. Two program participants serve as both trustee and deacon. Five program participants are designated as trustees in training. Five members of the church board

could not participate in the training project. (two deacons, two trustees, and one individual serving as trustee and deacon)

The participants ranged in age from thirty-three to eighty. The median age for participants was fifty-nine. The educational demographic responses revealed that one participant held a post graduate degree, four participants had college degrees, two participants attended trade or vocational schools, five participants had high school diplomas, and two participants reported below high school training. Literacy skill challenges were evident to the researcher throughout this project. The project participants reported being members of the church for a range of two years to forty-five years. The project participants reported serving on the deacon board and/or trustee board for a range of four years to thirty-nine years. (It was determined that since trustees in training had not served for a full year in an official capacity that this data did not apply to them.)

Analysis of the demographic data immediately revealed the sources of conflict on the church board. Gary McIntosh writes,

As we study American society today, we see that there are groups of people with shared characteristics and similar interests. We can fit most people into four broad groups.

Those who range in age from the late fifties and up can be called Builders; the Boomers are those in their late thirties to mid fifties; young adults in their twenties to late thirties are Busters; and those younger than twenty are the Bridgers.<sup>2</sup>

Looking at the demographic data (Table 1 in Appendix A) the researcher discovered that of the generational categories described above, the five deacons and the two trustee/deacon participants were composed of 71% Builders and 29% Busters. The two trustees and five trustees in training were 29% Builders, 57% Boomers, and 14 percent Busters (one participant). McIntosh states, “Generational waves can collide in a

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<sup>2</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, *One Church Four Generations: Understanding And Reaching All Ages In Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 15.

kind of riptide. As the seventy-six-million Boomer wave converges with the Builder wave and crashes into the Buster and Bridger wave, numerous problems emerge.”<sup>3</sup>

Challenges on the church board can be attributed to the collision of generational waves at Bethel that cause conflict.

Hugh F. Halverstadt states,

Conflicts are power struggles over differences: differing information or differing beliefs; differing interests, desires, or values; differing abilities to secure needed resources. As Jay Hall puts it, “Thus, conflict is defined here as essentially the circumstances—both emotional and substantive—which can be brought about by the presence of differences between parties who are for whatever reason, in forced contact with one another.”<sup>4</sup>

Halverstadt continues,

Power is to the social process of conflicts what oxygen is to the biological process of our physical bodies. However different parties’ issues or feelings may be, they all use power. They will exercise their power either to overcome one another (dirty fighting) or to collaborate with one another (fair fighting). In virtually every case, parties will use power both ways in church fights. But the critical question is which way of using power predominates.<sup>5</sup>

An analysis of questions one through ten follows. Questions one through eight of the preliminary survey focused upon collecting data regarding participant’s background and experiences and well as participation in other leadership training experiences.

Following are the questions and responses:

Question #1- Do you serve on any board of other organizations? 36% - Yes; 58%-N and 1-No Response.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh F. Halverstadt, *Managing Church Conflict* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Know Press, 1991), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Question #2 – Have you participated in any organizational board orientation, development or training programs? 50%-Yes; 50%-No

Question #3 – Are you involved or have you been involved in other ministries/auxiliaries/ clubs of the church? 79% Yes; 14% No; 1 No Response

Question #4 – Are you or have you been an officer or leader of a ministry/auxiliary/club of the church? 57%-Yes; 36%-No; 1 – No Response

Question #5 – Have you participated in a membership orientation/training program? 57%-Yes; 38%-No; 1- No Response

Question #6 – Have you participated in leadership and training programs? 57%-Yes; 43%-No

Question # 7 – Have you participated in church leadership orientation and training programs? 43%-Yes; 57%-No

Question #8 – Have you participated in an orientation or training program designed for Bethel Baptist Church? 29%-Yes; 71%-No

The researcher designed questions nine and ten to allow participants to provide additional background regarding their personal perception of their training and the areas of training needed for the joint board. Question number ten included seventeen areas for consideration and the option to include an area of need not listed. In question number ten, the participants were instructed to rank areas of training need from one to ten with one being most important and ten being least important.

The top five areas of training need based upon frequency of response and ranking that participants reported were communication, spiritual development, financial management, the mission of the church, and church board functions. The reader may see Table 3 in Appendix C to review participant results.

## **The Project Resumes: Session II**

As a result of review and analysis of the above data, the researcher developed three in-service training sessions and two half-day workshop training sessions. The training materials were designed to be empowering and affirming. A goal of the researcher in the process was to value the service and experiences of senior participants in the training model and explore opportunities for linkages and acceptance of new information and perspectives. The researcher observed that most of the conflict within the church board was due to generational difference and the lack orientation and training designed to unify the board around common understandings of board functions, goals, and objectives.

There was a definite appearance of conflict due to authority and power issues resulting from the misconception that either the deacon board or the trustee board served as the governing board and final decision-making body for the church. A great effort was made to discuss discontinuance of using the term “joint board” when referring to the church board. Also, it became apparent that there was not a sense of equality shared by members of both boards. Therefore, empowerment techniques were utilized to encourage acceptance of all board members as equals and to encourage the acceptance of responsibility for church board decisions and actions by all board members.

Based upon review of the preliminary survey data regarding participation in training initiatives and consultation with context associates, it was determined that the environment and culture must be changed to encourage participation in the training project. This was done initially by coordinating the church board training sessions to be held as part of church board meetings. Also, the culture and environment in the church

was impacted by preaching two sermons on leadership development and opening up the workshop sessions to participation by other members of the congregation.

Attendance in the training modules was almost one hundred percent with one participant missing two units of training but receiving handouts and information distributed in the sessions.

The second training session was held on September 20, 2005. All fourteen participants in the project were present. This session focused upon the topic of “Why Boards Exist.” Highlights of this session included lectures and discussion of the biblical foundations for church boards and a discussion of how boards function effectively. A handout was distributed listing roles and responsibilities of church boards. The presentation was well received and discussion among participants was positive.

A church board meeting was held following this presentation. The opening prayer included reference to the training and the desire that principles learned during the training session will be applied during the meeting. The meeting was positive and conflict was at a minimum. Following the meeting, participants reported verbally that training sessions were valuable and a good use of time.

Participants looked forward to upcoming training sessions and were eager to apply lessons learned to future meetings and interactions. The researcher was told by several participants that this was the first training that they had been exposed to since being part of the church board. Participants reported that they had a better understanding of their leadership position and responsibilities of church boards.

### **Mid Course Assessment and Adjustments: Sessions III**

In the third session of the training model held on October 18, 2005, the topic of discussion was “Improving Board Effectiveness.” Discussion was held regarding leadership qualification and board member qualifications. A church board self-assessment tool was administered as part of the lecture and presentation.

The assessment tool was utilized as a teaching resource as data from the assessment tool may have been misleading due to the literacy level of participants. After having participants complete the tool, discussion was shared regarding each question. The researcher believes this was a pivotal moment in the training session. Participants were able to disclose feelings and perceptions about the board, meetings, and relationships. Emphasis was placed upon issues of mutual respect and trust. It was agreed that there exist relational problems and unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict.

Following is summary of the results of selected questions from the church board performance assessment questionnaire for evaluative purposes (a copy of the questionnaire and results are in the appendix). A rating scale for each question was given as follows, 1=True; 2=More true than false; 3=more false than true; and 4=false.

Question #1 – The church board has clear focus and sense of direction. 29%-True; 42%-False; and 29% More false than true.

This response was interesting to the researcher as upon further discussion and training, it was acknowledged that the board was more reactionary and pragmatic in its functioning. There are no established goals and objectives or written policies and procedures developed to guide the board in its functions and decision-making. The board hopes to develop a policy and procedure manual in the coming year and to develop a strategic plan to guide the church as a result of this training. This position was elaborated

with the discussion and analysis of question seventeen and the responses. Question #17 – The board has established a clear set of policies that guide its decisions. 14%-True; 28.5%-More true than false; 14%-More false than true; 50%-False

Question #3 – I feel that my serving on the board is a valuable use of my time. 64%-True; 14%- More true than false; 14%-More false than true; 7%-False

The responses to question three indicate that the majority of the board members valued being on the church board. Many during follow-up questions and discussion agreed that the church board serves a major function in the life of the church. Attendance at board meetings and worship services symbolizes the importance perceived by the board members. Also the fact that with the extreme amount of conflict and mistrust, members continued service on the board validates the impression that time and service on the board is seen as a good use of time. The false respondent reported that it is more the structure of meetings and planning that frustrates that participant with participation on the board and meetings. This question also upon analysis was linked with number fifteen regarding service on the board and Christian service. Based upon the similar responses to both questions, board service was seen as an act of ministry.

Question #8 – The board is performing at a high percentage of its leadership potential. 0%-True; 43%-More true than false; 28.5%-More false than true; 28.5%-More false than true

The responses to this question were interesting to the researcher because no respondent believed this was true for the church board. This question signifies a readiness for training and a desire to improve.

A similar set of responses was found in answers to question #12.



Question #12 – The board members trust and show respect for one another. 0%-True; 28.5% More true than false; 36%More false than true; and 28.5%False.

Discussion of question twelve allowed church board members to discuss reasons for distrust and conflict. Participants were able to share frustrations about relations and interactions with board members. Participants agreed to a need to hold future training session on conflict resolution, decision-making skills, and communication.

One of the greatest challenges for the implementation of the training model was scheduling of sessions and changes made necessary because of funerals and other church functions. The participant researcher as stated above changed the initial model from working with the two boards independently and then in combination to working only with the board as a single unit. The participant researcher also had to change to handout designs and presentation methods that would relate to the literacy skills of participants. Care was taken at the end of the training model to have contextual associates administer the post training survey in an attempt to eliminate bias due to the participant researcher's role as pastor and instructor.

### **Workshop Sessions: Sessions IV and V**

Sessions four, five, and six were held as workshop sessions. Due to scheduling conflicts, session four was held on October 21 and 23. These sessions were also opened to the other church leaders and the general membership. These sessions addressed the topic, "Introduction To Christian Leadership." In part one, the leadership needs of the church were addressed. Principles of effective leadership were also shared with the participants.

Session five was held over a three-day period, October 26, 27, and 28. The goal of this session was to discuss the spiritual nature of Christian leadership. Biblical

foundations for Christian leadership were shared. The roles, challenges, and responsibilities of leadership were shared. Sessions four and five were primarily lecture and discussion sessions. These sessions were intended by the researcher to help participants understand that serving on the church board is a leadership responsibility. Many of the church board members are excellent followers but must be challenged to assume the role of leader with its obligations and responsibilities.

### **Wrap-up and Debriefing: Session VI**

Session six was held on December 3, due to schedule conflicts and funerals. This session focused upon developing a leadership team for the church. Topics discussed were strategic planning and teambuilding. Following the presentation of lecture material, a period of wrap-up and debriefing was held to discuss questions and obtain verbal feedback in regard to the training. This debriefing session was valuable. The debriefing session also provided a context for understanding the self-assessment questionnaire and post-training survey.

During the debriefing session, historical insights were shared regarding the church board, its development, and functioning. It was shared that information was known, recalled, and shared with others selectively based upon the memories of those present at church board meetings. It was also acknowledged that many of the decisions that were made in the board setting were not known to the congregation. This is important to note since members of the trustee board and trustees in training have only recently been added to the board. There was a commitment made to continue supporting training initiatives and to utilize the principles and concepts learned in future meetings and interactions.

Data from the post training survey indicated that participants viewed the training model as beneficial and a tool for future board members and a potential tool for other

churches. Participants responded that they were empowered to serve more effectively as board members as a result of the training. (see Appendix D for the survey and responses)

Participants were also given opportunity in the post survey to provide comments and short answer responses concerning how the training could be enhanced. Initial short answer responses were directed toward the application of knowledge and skills learned to the current board situation. Several participants expressed concern over follow-up and future training ventures. The post surveys revealed that the training and content was beneficial to transforming the church board from a vision inhibitor to a vision supporter.

Following are the responses to questions 1-7 of the post training survey using a rating scale of 0 to 4 with 1 meaning strongly agree and 0 meaning to strongly disagree:

1. The church board training was beneficial to me. 79% Strongly agree; 21% Agree
2. As a result of the training the church board will be more effective. 43% Strongly agree; 36% Agree; 21% Somewhat agree
3. Expressed training and developmental needs for participants were addressed. 57% Strongly agree; 36% Agree; 14% Somewhat agree
4. The church will benefit from the impact of his training. 71% Strongly agree; 28.5% Agree
5. The church board and the pastor will work together more effectively as a result of this training. 36% Strongly agree; 50% Agree; 14% Somewhat agree
6. Participants feel empowered, equipped, and enabled to serve as Christian leaders as a result of this training. 21% Strongly agree; 57% Agree; 14% Somewhat agree; 7% Disagree

7. This training can benefit future church board members and may be used to help other church boards. 50% Strongly agree; 50% Agree

Breakthroughs and testimonials regarding the impact of the training were shared in the final session. A key realization was that the church board had been operating dysfunctionally for over thirty years. It was also acknowledged that there are no clear policies and procedures to direct the board. Many decisions of the board are made and known only by a few members and this causes confusion and conflict. The church board members who participated acknowledged that training needs to be continued and that special areas of need for training are in the areas of spiritual development, decision-making and conflict resolution skills.

**CHAPTER SIX**  
**REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION: LOOKING BACK**  
**BEFORE MOVING AHEAD**

Based upon conversations with pastoral colleagues in ministry, the participant researcher represents a minority voice in discussions regarding the role of church boards and relationships with pastors in the traditional Black Baptist Church. A typical discussion is as follows:

Researcher: "I am working on a project to train church boards."

Pastor #1 (a veteran pastor): "There is no such thing as a church board. I eliminated church boards in my church because they are not biblical. You cannot find any reference to boards in Scripture."

Researcher: "But you have to understand that church boards are an integral part of the structure of many of our traditional Black Baptist Churches."

Pastor #2 (A young pastor): "I sat my trustees down because they were not spiritual and God has given the vision and leadership authority in the church to the pastor."

Researcher: "Are you aware that you can make lasting enemies of those whom you may need as allies in the future by sitting them down in such a manner. The real need is for church boards to be trained in regard to their roles and responsibilities. A trained board will be an asset and not a liability for both the pastor and the church."

The above conversation occurred in discussion with a small group of pastors at a recent denominational state convention meeting.

There exists an unhealthy tension between pastors and church boards. Pastors view church boards as hindrances to leadership and pastoral vision. Church boards feel that it is their obligation to protect the church from the pastor and oversee the general operations of the church. Because church board members are key leaders and stakeholders in most traditional Black Baptist Churches, pastors and church boards must learn to work together for renewal and revitalization of the traditional Black Baptist Church.

The project began with the question, “How to revitalize the traditional Black Baptist Church?” The participant researcher believes that the traditional Black Baptist church can be renewed and revitalized through empowering, equipping, and enabling church boards to work with pastors as change supporters as opposed to change inhibitors. In the context of the Bethel Baptist Church of White Plains, New York the researcher discovered that there was a need to train members of the church board in order to eliminate the board’s dysfunction and improve the board’s effectiveness. The current members of the church board are committed to Christ and service in the church but they have not been equipped and empowered to serve in their leadership roles.

In the context of Bethel, the church board is the governing board where most of the decisions impacting the church and its future are made. The church board at Bethel is a combination of the deacon board and the trustee board. The two boards were brought together without being given orientation, instruction, or training as to the purpose for combining the boards or how the new church board configuration was to function in the existing church structure. This structural problem and associated challenges existed for

over thirty years with tensions and conflict increasing between the deacons and trustees as each independent board would seek to assume the role of governing board for the congregation. This situation intensified during periods where there was a pastoral vacancy.

Analysis of the demographic data shows that the situation has become more tenuous when there are generational differences between the members of the deacon board and members of the trustee board. The differences are a source of conflict. The climate of conflict has escalated to one of distrust and disrespect. Conflict can be reduced through training and teambuilding efforts. This project provided an opportunity for two conflicting groups to grow closer together and become unified around a common cause or purpose. Revitalization and renewal begins with change and transformation in individuals and leadership groups. This observation has lead to sensitivity to the need for continued spiritual development and training. It has also increased the researcher's the awareness of the need to conduct context analysis and utilize data collection techniques when addressing challenges or problems to gain a better understanding of issues involved in the change process.

Initially, the researcher was preparing to focus upon developing a training model focused upon improving leadership skills as a project. As a result of preliminary observations and evaluation of the pre-training survey, the researcher focused upon developing an orientation and development training program that focused on explaining the role and function of church boards and the development of Christian leadership principles.

The researcher is aware that there are some limitations to this study. A key factor for consideration is the researcher as a participant in the training process. The experience, skills, and sensitivity of the researcher will impact the outcome. The researcher must be patient and seek to affirm rather than alienate church board members. The researcher must assess the literacy skills of participants and design training modules appropriately.

The greatest challenge in this study was in response to demographic information received in the preliminary survey, which led to designing presentations and materials to meet the needs of participants rather than the needs of the researcher so that effective learning could occur. The researcher also became aware of the need to include preaching as an element of the training project for transformation to occur in the ministry context.

Future training will be focused upon teambuilding, communication skills, and administrative responsibilities for church boards. It will be necessary to conduct training programs designed specifically for deacons and trustees to ensure that they are fulfilling their respective roles and functions in the church structure as well as serving on the church governing board. In addition, in response to suggestions supplied by participants, small group learning experiences will be incorporated into the training modules, and groups will develop action plans for follow-up and integration of concepts taught into future meetings and practices.

As the church continues to grow, greater care will be taken in the selection of future members of the church board. The nominating and selection process will be reevaluated. Consideration will be given to evaluating candidates on the basis of spiritual leadership qualifications and qualifications necessary for board members as recommended by Malphurs and others.



As a result of this experience, the researcher and participants have a greater awareness of the positive and negative roles conflict plays in implementing change in ministry context. The researcher and participants have gained insight regarding the need to have a vision, clear goals and objectives, and a strategic plan to guide church leaders and the congregation toward achieving its purposes. The importance of sharing knowledge and information was revealed in order to generate trust and eliminate misunderstandings.

The results of this study also revealed areas for additional study. One area of study would be the role of gender and gender-related issues related to leadership roles in a traditional Black Baptist Church such as Bethel. The researcher also observed that additional study would be beneficial in the area of equipping and empowering Busters and Bridgers for transition into church leadership positions in a traditional Black Baptist Church such as Bethel. Further study and research needs to be conducted on the impact of literacy skills for leadership and change and renewal efforts in a traditional Black Baptist Church such as Bethel.

This experience has proved to be beneficial to the researcher and participants. There has been a noted change and transformation in the researcher and participants. The church board is seeking to function more effectively. The church has set priorities this year for developing a policy and procedure manual to guide church operations. The church board has committed to working with the pastor in vision casting, discovering church core values, and establishing a strategic plan to guide the church toward attaining its purposes, goals, and objectives.

Conflict on the church board has been reduced. Deacons and trustees have covenanted to work closer together in committees on the church board. The church board

has made the commitment to apply principles, as well as implement recommended practices to conduct more effective church board meetings in the future and provide improved leadership. The church board has undertaken the responsibility to work with the pastor as change supporters for renewal and revitalization at Bethel. Our motto continues to be, “We’re all in this together, becoming the church God has called us to be.”

**APPENDIX A**  
**TRAINING MODULES AND HANDOUTS**

Bethel Baptist Church  
 Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher  
 1 Fisher Court  
 White Plains, NY 10601  
 Church Board Development Training  
**Module #1 – “The Purpose of Leadership Training”**

Session Objectives:

1. To introduce training program and announce training goals and objectives
2. To obtain commitment of participants and enlistment participants as stakeholders in the training process
3. To conduct preliminary survey to obtain demographic information and background information to discover training needs and focus

Opening Prayer and Meditation (Scriptural Foundation – Ephesians 4:1-16)

Introduction

- A. Present program overview and objectives
  - B. Address questions and concerns
  - C. Conduct preliminary survey
- I. Opening lecture and discussion: “The Purpose and Benefits of Leadership Training”
    - a. Why is leadership training necessary?
    - b. Biblical foundations for leadership training
      - i. Old Testament foundations
      - ii. New Testament foundations
      - iii. Focus: Ephesians 4:1-16
    - c. Discussion of training initiatives at Bethel (reflection of past practices and personal experiences)
    - d. The benefits of effective leadership training
  - II. Lecture and discussion: “The Purpose and Nature of the Church”
    - a. What is the church?
    - b. What is the purpose of the church? (Discuss Rick Warren’s *The Purpose Driven Church* and Joe S. Ellis’ *The Church On Purpose* as resources)  
List five purposes of the church.
    - c. Discuss church structure and polity
    - d. Discuss church officers and leaders
  - III. Lecture and discussion: “Congregational Life Cycle Theory, Shawchuck and Heuser”
    - a. Congregational Life Cycle Theory
    - b. Discuss Current Stage of Congregational Life Cycle for Bethel
    - c. Discuss the need for “renewal and revitalization” and role of church leaders

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**Module #2 – “Why Church Boards and Committees Exist”**

Opening Prayer and Meditation (Scriptural Emphasis – Exodus 18:13-27)

Introduction

- A. Brief review of objectives and overview of presentation from Module #1)
  - B. Objectives of this section – the development and functioning of church boards
  - C. Reflection upon current status of Bethel’s church board and functioning
- 
- I. Lecture and discussion: “Why Church Boards and Committees Exist”
    - a. Boards and committees exist for the purpose of getting the work of the ministry done both efficiently and effectively.
    - b. Utilizing boards and committees maximizes effectiveness and efficiency through utilizing creativity and coordinating efforts to accomplish specific tasks.
    - c. Utilizing boards and committees allows others to share in the work and responsibility for ministry.
  - II. Lecture and discussion: Biblical foundations for the establishment of boards and committees in the church
    - a. Old Testament – Moses and Jethro in Exodus 18:13-27
    - b. New Testament – Jesus and the Twelve, the Apostles and Paul and the early Church
    - c. Developments in the Black Church (resource *Church Administration in the Black Perspective* by Massey and McKinney) – emphasize the role of pastor, deacons, and trustees as leaders in the church and challenges regarding power and authority.
    - d. Discuss historical development of the “Joint Board” at Bethel. Discuss historical background and functioning. Discuss lack of clear guidelines regarding roles and responsibilities creating problem in current leadership and functioning.
  - III. Lecture and discussion: Roles and Responsibilities of Church (distribute Handout “Roles and Responsibilities of Governing Boards based on Michael Anthony’s *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*)

- a. A definition of a church “governing board”

“A governing board is a gathering of two or more wise, spiritually qualified leaders who have been entrusted with authority to use their power to direct the affairs of the church.”

**Aubrey Malphurs**  
***Leading Leaders***

- b. Two types of board
  - i. Advisory board
  - ii. Governing board
- c. Board authority
  - i. Power and the organization
  - ii. Different kinds of authority
    - 1. Inform and act
    - 2. Act and inform
    - 3. Act authority
  - iii. Power is usually what gets things done. Usually the congregation or the board itself has entrusted the board with authority to exercise power on behalf of the church regarding its affairs.

#### IV. Lecture and discussion: Functions of an “effective” church board

- a. The Problem: “How most boards function”
- b. The Solution: “How boards should function”
  - 1. Two constraints
  - 2. Primary board functions
    - a. Prayer
    - b. Monitoring
    - c. Deciding
    - d. Advising
  - 3. Occasional board functions
- c. How is our church board functioning?

Roles and Responsibilities of Governing Boards

**(By Michael Anthony in *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*)**

- 1. Drawing on the history and traditions of the organization's stated reason for being, the board interprets and sustains the mission of the organization, ensuring that each department and component of the organization is consistent with the stated mission.**
- 2. The board represents the interests and concerns of the members whose resources allow the organization to pursue its mission.**
- 3. The board selects the chief executive or professional director [pastor] and then provides guidance, support, and accountability to this individual.**
- 4. The board translates faith, traditions, beliefs, mission, and the institution's core values into policies and rules that guide the executive director and his or her senior staff in their activities.**
- 5. The board works with the executive director to develop long-range plans, goals, and objectives for the organization and then monitors progress toward the completion of those goals.**
- 6. The board is responsible for ensuring that the organization has the financial resources necessary to fulfill its mission and goals.**
- 7. The board is responsible for ensuring that all its decisions and actions meet the requirements of ethics and laws, including both civil and religious law where applicable.**
- 8. The board ensures that the organization uses all of its resources, including financial and personnel, as efficiently and effectively as possible.**

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**Module #3 – “Improving Church Boards Functioning”**

Opening Prayer and Meditation (Scriptural emphasis: Numbers 11)

Introduction

- A. Review last session and training objectives
  - B. Discuss evaluation and assessment of leadership and church boards
  - C. Discuss assessment and evaluation tools
- 
- I. Open discussion: Biblical Qualifications for Leaders – Handout  
“Qualifications for Leaders based upon Malphurs”
- 
- 
- II. Open discussion: Board Qualifications – Handout “Board Qualification and  
Board Self Evaluation Questions by Malphurs”
- 
- 
- III. Administer Board Assessment Tool by Malphurs
- 
- 
- IV. Group discussion of topics and responses to Malphurs’ Board Assessment  
Tool



### **Qualifications for Leaders**

**(By Aubrey Malphurs in *Leading Leaders*)**

**Scriptural Foundations: Acts 6:3-5; 1 Tim. 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3**

- The leader must be “above reproach”, that is, he or she has a good reputation among the people. There is nothing that someone could use as an accusation against him or her. This is an overarching qualification that perhaps is a summary of all the rest.
- If married, the person is the husband of one wife or wife of one husband.
- He or she is temperate or well balanced, not given to extremes.
- He or she is sensible, showing good judgment in life and having a proper perspective regarding self and his or her abilities.
- The person is respectable, God-honoring in all he or she does, so that people have and show respect for him or her.
- He or she is hospitable, using his or her home as a place to serve and minister to people, whether Christians or non-Christians.
- He or she is able to teach. When this person teaches the Bible, he or she handles the scriptures with reasonable skill.
- If a person drinks alcoholic beverages or engages in other permissible but potentially addictive practices, he or she does so in moderation.
- This person is never violent and doesn’t ever lose control to the point of striking or causing harm to other people or their property.
- He or she is gentle.
- He or she is not quarrelsome.
- This person does not love money and never gives the impression that he or she serves God for material gain.
- If married with a family, this person manages marriage and the family well.
- This person is not a recent convert.
- This person has a good reputation with lost people and those who are not part of the church.

### **Board Qualifications**

**(By Aubrey Malphurs *Leading Leaders*)**

**A board member should...**

- **Be spiritually qualified**
- **Be reliable and teachable**
- **Be in doctrinal agreement**
- **Be in alignment with the church's values, mission, vision, and strategies**
- **Be an involved member of the church**
- **Be reasonably loyal to the pastor**
- **Respect other board members**
- **Be nontraditional**
- **Have their spouse's support**

**Board Self Evaluation Questions:**

- 1. Is the leadership style of chairpersons effective?**
- 2. Do the board chairpersons and the pastor work well together?**
- 3. Do the board chairpersons and the pastor lead within their respective roles?**
- 4. Do the pastor and/or chairpersons encourage board contributions?**
- 5. Is it okay for board members to disagree among themselves?**
- 6. Do the board members conduct themselves during the meetings in a way that honors the Savior?**
- 7. Do the members support the board's decisions even when one or more disagree with that decision?**
- 8. Do you believe that the board is making a vital contribution to the church and its ministry?**
- 9. Does anyone try to control the board or dominate its meeting?**
- 10. Do any board members interfere with the staff's work?**

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Church Board Orientation/Training

**Church Board Performance Assessment Survey**  
**(Adaptation of Aubrey Malphurs' Board Assessment Tool from *Leading Leaders*)**

This Church Board Performance Assessment Survey is a tool designed to evaluate the performance of the church board and church board members. It is also designed to assess the satisfaction of members of the church board with participation on the church board and personal perceptions of church board functioning and accomplishments.

Please answer the following questions honestly and as truthfully as possible based upon your personal experience on the church board and your personal observations regarding church board functioning and accomplishments. Use the following scale and circle the number under the response that best matches your feelings and perceptions. The numbers relate to the following responses: 1 = True; 2 = More true than false; 3 = More false than true; 4 = False. After completing the questions, we will add the numbered responses to determine a final score and assessment of church board performance and church board member perceptions.

Question	True 1	More true than false 2	More false than true 3	False 4
1. The board has a clear focus and sense of direction.	1	2	3	4
2. The board addresses important church issues.	1	2	3	4
3. I feel that my serving on the board is a valuable use of my time.	1	2	3	4
4. The board doesn't micromanage the church and its ministry.	1	2	3	4
5. I feel that the work on the church board is a good use of my gifts and abilities.	1	2	3	4

6. The board does not spend time on trivial matters.	1	2	3	4
7. No person dominates or tries to control the board.	1	2	3	4
8. The board is performing at a high percentage of its leadership potential.	1	2	3	4
9. The board is proactive not reactive in its work.	1	2	3	4
10. The board members often disagree and debate with one another.	1	2	3	4
11. New board members receive orientation and training.	1	2	3	4
12. The board members trust and show respect for one another.	1	2	3	4
13. The board members are well qualified spiritually for the board's work.	1	2	3	4
14. The board has clear set lines of authority between the pastor and itself.	1	2	3	4
15. By being on the board, I am making a significant difference for Christ.	1	2	3	4

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I am disappointed when board meetings are canceled.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. The board has established a clear set of policies that guide its decisions.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. It is rare that board meetings last for more than two hours.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. All items that appear on the board's agenda have been carefully screened by the pastor, and other key leaders. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. Rarely do board members interfere with the work of staff and volunteer ministry leaders.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Add up all scores that you have circled. Total score: \_\_\_\_\_**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**TABLE 1. CHURCH BOARD PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Question Responses	1 TRUE	2 MORE TRUE THAN FALSE	3 MORE FALSE THAN TRUE	4 FALSE
<b><u>Question #</u></b>				
1	4	6	4	0
2	7	5	2	0
3	9	2	2	1
4	5	6	2	1
5	8	6	0	0
6	4	4	5	1
7	4	6	3	1
8	0	6	4	4
9	3	7	3	2
10	6	4	3	0
11	2	5	3	4
12	0	4	5	4
13	5	1	7	2
14	5	5	2	2
15	8	5	1	0
16	6	2	4	2
17	2	4	2	7
18	4	1	6	2
19	4	5	1	4
20	2	3	4	5

Number = Frequency of Responses

1= True; 2 = More True Than False; 3 = More False Than True; and 4 = False

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 Church Board Development Training

**Module #4 – “Introduction To Christian Leadership – Part I”**

Opening Prayer and Meditation (Scriptural emphasis: Nehemiah 1)

Introduction

- A. Review previous session and training objectives
- B. Discuss workshop format
- D. Overview of topics: Leadership, Servant Leadership, and Spiritual Leadership

I. The Church Needs Leaders That Are Christian

*“Observation and experience has led me to the conclusion that no single factor is more important to congregational vitality than leadership. Leadership matters. Yet while leadership matters and is critical to congregational vitality, there is no model for style of leadership that is normative or that fits all sizes and situations. How that leadership is shaped and exercised is open to multiple variations that fit the people, the congregation, and the context.”*

Anthony B. Robinson  
*Transforming Congregational Culture (p. 122)*

A. What Leaders Do...?

- Leaders need to be able to \_\_\_\_\_
- Leaders need to be able to \_\_\_\_\_
- Leaders need to be able to \_\_\_\_\_

B. Effective Leaders

- Work with \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ leadership
- \_\_\_\_\_ others

C. Challenges to the Church and Christian Leaders

- Lack of clarity and ambivalence
- Clergy and laity confusion
- Congregational resistance
- Lack of leadership development and training

D. Six Strategies for Leaders (By Anthony B. Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, p. 124-136)

1. Get to the Balcony
2. Identify the “Adaptive Challenge”
3. Regulate Distress
4. Maintain Disciplined Attention
5. Give Responsibility Back
6. Protect Leadership from Below

## II. Defining Leadership

*“Leadership is the process of motivating, mobilizing, resourcing, and directing people to passionately and strategically pursue a vision from God that a group jointly embraces.”*

George Barna  
*A Fish Out of Water (p. 7)*

### A. Observations On Leadership

- How would you define leadership?
- What leadership is not...
- What leadership is...?
  - Distinguishing between leadership and management
  - Everybody has potential to lead
    - a. Situational leaders
    - b. Habitual leaders
  - Four types of leaders – Leadership is a team effort
- Challenging questions and considerations for leaders...
  - What is your motivation for being a leader?
  - What is the basis for your actions and decisions?
  - How do you motivate others to follow or support your leadership initiatives?

### B. Leadership Ambition and Desire

- Is it right for a person to want to be a leader?
- Warning and encouragement from scripture – see 1 Timothy 3:1 and Jeremiah 45:5
- Defining ambition and determining the motive behind ambition
- The key is motive – it is good to desire to give the Lord and the church the best quality of service
- The principle of greatness – Mark 10:42-44
- J. Oswald Sanders states, *“True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you.”* (p.15)

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Church Board Development Training  
**Module #5 – “Introduction To Christian Leadership – Part II”**

Opening Prayer and Meditation (Scriptural emphasis: Isaiah 6:1-8)

Introduction

- A. Review previous session and training objectives
- B. Overview of topics: Leadership, Servant Leadership, and Spiritual Leadership

I. The Search for Leaders

- i. Real leaders are hard to find
- ii. The Bible shows that when God does find a person who is ready to lead, to commit to full discipleship and take on the responsibility for others, that person is used to the limit...
- iii. To be a leader in the church requires \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- iv. The church needs leaders who are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- v. “Spiritual leaders are not elected, appointed, or created by synods or churchly assemblies. God alone makes them. One does not become a spiritual leader by merely filling an office, taking course work in the subject, or resolving in one’s will to do this task. A person must qualify to be a spiritual leader.” (Sanders p. 18)
- vi. Spiritual leadership development is a process guided and directed by God

II. The Master’s Master Principle – Mark 10:43-44

- A. The bible uses the term leader 6 times, but more frequently refers to the role as servant
- B. Jesus revolutionizes the term servant teaching that the kingdom of God is a community where each member serves the other.
- C. Our loving service should spread to the needy world around us.
- D. Two principles the church must never forget:
  - 1. The sovereignty of spiritual leadership
  - 2. The suffering of spiritual leadership

**The Spirit of Servanthood – Principles Modeled by  
 Christ (Isaiah 42)**

Dependence  
 Approval

Modesty  
Empathy  
Optimism  
Anointing

- *“Are we greater than our Lord? Can we do effective ministry without the Spirit of God working through us at every step? God offers us the same anointing. May we follow close to the great Servant, and receive the Spirit who shows us more of the Master.”*

J. Oswald Sanders  
*Spiritual Leadership (p. 25)*

### III. Spiritual Leadership – Qualifications for Christian Leaders

#### A. Insights on Spiritual Leadership

#### B. Essential Qualifications of Leadership

#### C. Spiritual Considerations and Disciplines

- Leaders must be Spirit-filled
- Leadership and spiritual gifts
- Leadership and prayer
- Leadership and time management
- Leadership and study/reading
- Other ways to improve your leadership

### IV. Spiritual Leadership – Roles, Challenges, and Responsibilities

- The Cost of Leadership
- The Responsibilities of Leadership
- The Tests of Leadership
- The Art of Delegation
- Replacing Leaders
- Reproducing Leaders

Conclusion: Becoming a Model Leader

Recommended Reading:

1. *A Fish Out Of Water* by George Barna
2. *Transforming Congregational Culture* by Anthony B. Robinson
3. *Spiritual Leadership* by J. Oswald Sanders

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**Module #6 – “Becoming A Twenty-first Century Leadership Team”**

Opening Prayer and Meditation (Scriptural emphasis: Matthew 28:19-20)

Introduction

- A. Review previous session and training objectives
  - B. Emphasis – the development of a leadership team
  - C. Conduct debriefing and post-training evaluation
- 
- I. Strategic Planning
    - a. Why plan?
    - b. Nine steps in strategic planning by Aubrey Malphurs
    - c. Essential to strategic planning
      - i. Mission and Purpose
      - ii. Vision
      - iii. Core values
      - iv. Assessment of resources
    - d. Develop plan, implement, and evaluate progress
  - II. Building A Team
    - a. Challenges confronting effective church board functioning
    - b. The Pastor’s role and the Board
    - c. Decision making, conflict resolution, and communication skills
    - d. Limitations of Board
  - III. Debriefing and Evaluation
    - a. Where do we go from here?
    - b. Questions and comments on training program
    - c. Recommendations and future training needs
  - IV. Post-training Evaluation Survey

Conclusion: “Leadership Challenge – Ephesians 4:1-16”

**APPENDIX B**  
**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT FORM**

Bethel Baptist Church  
Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher  
1 Fisher Court  
White Plains, New York 10601

Our motto: "We're all in this together, being the church God has called us to be."

July 26, 2005

To: Members of the Church Joint Board

From: Rev. Edward O. Williamson

Subject: Participation in Church Board Development Project

Dear Members of the Church Joint Board,

Eph 4:11-16

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head -- Christ -- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. NKJV

I have shared with you since accepting the call to serve as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church that I was in the process of developing a project in accordance with requirements of the United Seminary's Doctor of Ministry Degree Program. After much prayer, study, and reflection upon the needs and future ministry direction of our congregation, I have been led to focus my project upon the issue of development and training of the Church Joint Board.

The Church Joint Board is a key leadership element according the structure, polity, and practice of our congregation. The Church Joint Board is the channel through which initiatives regarding the vision, mission, and purposes of the church are processed, evaluated, and acted upon. The Church Joint Board as it currently exists and operates limits the ability of the congregation to effectively pursue its vision, mission, and purposes and also limits the potential for future growth and revitalized ministry to meet the changing needs and challenges of members and constituents living in the twenty-first century.

To begin the process of church revitalization for Bethel Baptist Church, I am seeking your assistance, participation, and support in this initial effort. The project is what is known as an action research project. Which means that the members of the Church Joint Board, selected advisors, and myself will work together as subject participants and a research team to develop, implement, and provide effective Church Joint Board training that will enable members of the Church Joint Board to assist the pastor and other leaders in promoting and implementing new vision and changes in the congregation that will revitalize the congregation's ministry.

Church Joint Board members participating in the project will be asked to complete surveys, participate in interview sessions, and attend training sessions. As a result of participating in this project, it is hoped that participants will be better equipped to serve effectively on the Church Joint Board and that the Church Joint Board will be enabled to serve as key leadership and supporters of Bethel Baptist Church's future revitalization efforts.

Please complete the attached preliminary survey and then review and sign the attached consent form to confirm your participation in this project. Because of the nature of this project, the utmost care and discretion will be used regarding issues of confidentiality and consent for use of specific quotes and information. Also, participants will be given opportunities to review the project and report of the findings before its final submission.

This is a wonderful opportunity not only for Bethel Baptist Church, but this effort can also become a model and aide to other churches and the kingdom. If you have additional questions or concerns regarding this project and your participation, please feel free to contact me by phone or schedule an appointment for the discussion of issues.

Sincerely,

Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher  
Bethel Baptist Church  
July 26, 2005

Bethel Baptist Church  
Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher  
1 Fisher Court  
White Plains, New York 10601

July 26, 2005

To: Church Joint Board Members

From: Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher

Subject: Participant Consent Form

Dear Church Joint Board Member,

You are invited to participate in an action research project being implemented to provide training and development for the Church Joint Board of Bethel Baptist Church. This project is part of the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry Program of United Theological Seminary of Dayton, Ohio. Please be advised that data collected and methods developed during this process will become part of a published public research document.

Your participation in this project is totally on a voluntary basis. Information gained will be treated with discretion and handled with the utmost of moral and ethical care and consideration. Participants will provide data and feedback for this research project through surveys and interviews. Participants will be required to participate in training sessions. Upon completion of the project, participants will be given an opportunity to review and discuss findings with the participant/researcher.

Thank you,

Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher  
Bethel Baptist Church  
July 26, 2005

\_\_\_ I am willing to participate in the project and will comply with requirements for the project.

\_\_\_ I am unwilling to participate in the project as a participant, but I will be a prayerful supporter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**  
**PRELIMINARY SURVEY AND RESPONSES**



Bethel Baptist Church  
 Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher  
 1 Fisher Court  
 White Plains, New York 10601

### **Preliminary Survey #1 – Church Joint Board Development Project**

We are asking all Church Joint Board Members and Trustees in training to complete the following survey as part of the Church Joint Board development project. Information will be used to provide background information and determine training needs and concerns to be addressed as part of the Church Joint Board Development Project.

#### **Demographic Data:**

Church Joint Board Member: ☐ Deacon ☐ Trustee ☐ Both ☐ Trainee

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married

Education: ☐ Below High School ☐ H.S./GED ☐ College 4yr/PostGraduate  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years Member of the Church \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Years as Trustee \_\_\_\_\_  
 Deacon ☐ Both ☐ Trainee ☐

#### **Background & Training:**

1. Do you serve on any boards of other organizations? ☐ Y ☐ N
2. Have you participated in any organizational board orientation, development, or training programs? ☐ Y ☐ N
3. Are you involved or have you been involved in other ministries/auxiliaries/clubs of the church? ☐ Y ☐ N
4. Are you or have you been an officer or leader of a ministry/auxiliary/club of the church? ☐ Y ☐ N
5. Have you participated in a membership orientation/training program? ☐ Y ☐ N
6. Have you participated in leadership orientation and training programs? ☐ Y ☐ N
7. Have you participated in church leadership orientation and training programs?  
☐ Y ☐ N
8. Have you participated in an orientation or training program designed for Bethel Baptist Church? ☐ Y ☐ N
9. Describe your training and background that prepares you for serving on the Joint Board of Bethel Baptist Church: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Rank the areas of training most needed for the Joint Boar of Bethel Baptist Church from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important:

\_\_\_ Administration    \_\_\_ Mission of the Church    \_\_\_ Finance Management  
 \_\_\_ Planning    \_\_\_ Communication    \_\_\_ Conflict Resolution/Management  
 \_\_\_ Legal Responsibilities    \_\_\_ Spiritual Development    \_\_\_ People Skills  
 \_\_\_ Leadership    \_\_\_ Follower-ship    \_\_\_ Computer Skills    \_\_\_ Leading Change  
 \_\_\_ Church Polity    \_\_\_ Spiritual Authority    \_\_\_ Vision Casting  
 \_\_\_ Board Functions & Responsibilities    \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: What would you like to see addressed or accomplished as a result of the Church Joint Board Development Project: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Table 2. Preliminary Survey Participant Data**

Participant	Office	Sex	Age	Education	Church Membership	Years of Service
1	D	M	53	M	30	17
2	D	M	80	HS	65	39
3	D	M	50	C	11	4
4	D	M	75	BHS	45	37
5	D	M	78	TS	46	39
6	T	F	50	C	38	4
7	T	F	44	C	32	4
8	B	M	68	HS	40	5D/20T
9	B	M	65	HS	35	9D/18T
10	TR	M	62	HS	13	N/A
11	TR	M	65	BHS	14	N/A
12	TR	F	53	TS	5	N/A
13	TR	M	43	HS	2	N/A
14	TR	M	33	C	4	N/A

Office: D=Deacon, T=Trustee, B=Both, TR=Trustee

Sex: M=Male, F=Female

Education: M=Master Level, HS=High School, C=College, BHS=Below High School,  
TS=Trade School/Vocational Training

N/A=Not Applicable

**Table 3. Preliminary Survey Data Questions 1-8**

Parti- cipant	Q 1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
3	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
4	Y	Y	NA	NA	NA	Y	Y	Y
5	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
6	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
9	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
10	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
12	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
13	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
14	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

**Y = Yes; N = No; NA = No Answer**

**TABLE 4. PRELIMINARY SURVEY DATA QUESTION #10**

Ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Training Need	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Administration	3	0	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	0
Mission of the Church	5	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	1
Finance Management	5	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
Planning	4	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Communication	8	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Conflict	2	1	1		3	2	0	0	0	0
Legal Responsibilities	2	0	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Spiritual Development	6	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
People Skills	3	1	2	0	2	2	1	0	1	1
Leadership	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0
Followership	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
Computer Skills	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Leading Change	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Church Polity	3	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0
Spiritual Authority	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Vision Casting	3	0	1	1	2	0	1		1	0
Board Functions	5	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	2

Numbers = Frequency of Responses

Rating Scale: 1= Most Important – 10=Least Important

**APPENDIX D**  
**POST TRAINING SURVEY AND RESPONSES**

Bethel Baptist Church  
 Rev. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher  
 1 Fisher Court  
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**Post Training Survey & Evaluation: Church Board Training**

Dear Church Board Training Participant,

Thank you for participating in this church board training research project. Please complete the following survey and evaluation form to the best of your ability. Please be open and honest with your responses so that this project can be analyzed and evaluated honestly and effectively.

Answer the questions by circling the response that matches your answer. The scale for responses will range from Strongly Agree 4 to Strongly Disagree 0. You may also include brief comments following each question and give a closing statement at the end of the survey and evaluation form.

Question:	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Somewhat Agree 2	Disagree 1	Strongly Disagree 0
-----------	------------------------	------------	------------------------	---------------	---------------------------

1. The church board training was beneficial to me.	4	3	2	1	0
--	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. As a result of the training the church board will be more effective.	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Expressed training and developmental needs for participants were addressed.	4	3	2	1	0
--	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The church will benefit from  
the impact of this training.      4                      3                      2                      1                      0  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. The church board and the pastor  
will work together more effectively  
as a result of this training.      4                      3                      2                      1                      0  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Participants feel empowered, equipped,  
and enabled to serve as Christian leaders  
as a result of this training.      4                      3                      2                      1                      0  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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7. This training can benefit future church board  
members and may be used to help other  
church boards.      4                      3                      2                      1                      0  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What the most important thing you learned during the training?

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9. What would you suggest to improve this training program?

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10. What would you suggest is the greatest area of need for the training of members of church boards?

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**Table 5. Post Training Survey Data Questions 1-7**

Participant	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
1	4	2	3	3	2	2	3
2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	4	4	4	4	3	3	4
4	4	3	4	4	3	3	3
5	4	4	4	4	3	2	3
6	4	3	3	4	4	3	4
7	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
8	3	2	3	3	2	1	3
9	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
10	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
11	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
12	4	2	4	3	3	3	4
13	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
14	4	4	4	4	4	3	3

**Scale: 4 = Strongly Agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Somewhat Agree; 1 = Disagree;**

**0 = Strongly Disagree**

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